

**AFTER THE EXPULSIONS: THE LOST GERMAN HEIMAT IN MEMORY,
MONUMENTS AND MUSEUMS**

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ABSTRACT

This comparative thesis explores how museums and monuments in postwar east and west Germany commemorate the eastern territories that were lost after 1945. I focus on the concept of *Heimat* which spans aesthetics and politics, psychological and political identity and emerges from a condition of loss, thus it features highly in my attempt to understand the development and current state of memorialisation. The centrality of the notion of *Heimat* in expellee memorialisation is a field as yet little explored in research on the expulsions, particularly in east Germany.

Following chapters on the historical context, *Heimat*, and cultural memory, Chapter Three discusses monuments erected between 1947 and 1989 by expellees who resettled in West Germany which are used to mourn, replace, reflect on and revere the old *Heimat*. I compare post-unification west and east German memorials, discussing key differences resulting from the former taboo on expellee commemoration in East Germany. I additionally examine changing sites of memory, memorials that illustrate a shifting integration process and investigate the use of symbolism. Chapter Four considers the interaction between eyewitnesses, historians and curators in the portrayal of history in museums and *Heimatstuben* at Görlitz, Greifswald, Lüneburg, Regensburg, Molfsee, Gehren, Rendsburg and Altenburg, in addition to the *Altvaterturm* in Thuringia. Chapter Five discusses the contentious Berlin *Stiftung Flucht Vertreibung Versöhnung* Centre, first mooted in 1999 by the *Bund der Vertriebenen* as a Centre against Expulsions. The tension between ‘German victims’ and ‘victims of the Germans’ is a recurring theme in this thesis. My conclusions highlight how memorialisation

is framed clearly within the contemporary socio-political context, demonstrate the durability and flexibility of the term *Heimat* and illustrate the resilience of the regard for the lost territories, not only for expellees; the idea of the German East persists in German cultural memory.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 'Das Erste'
BdV	Bund der Vertriebenen – Vereinigte Landsmannschaften und Landesverbände
BHE	Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten
BKM	Der Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien
BVFG	Bundesvertriebenengesetz
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union
DHM	Deutsches Historisches Museum
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany, from 1949-1990)
GDR	German Democratic Republic (East Germany, from 1949-1990)
SBZ	Sowjetische Besatzungszone
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands
SFVV	Stiftung Flucht Vertreibung und Versöhnung
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
ZgV	Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen

INTRODUCTION: THE EXPULSIONS AND AFTERMATH

‘Heimat ist Heimat nur in Heimatlosigkeit’¹

In the sixty-eight years since the forced transfer of around twelve million ethnic Germans at the end of World War Two into what remained of Germany after the borders were reorganised,² more than 1,300 monuments have been erected, many in the years since the fall of communism and the unification of Germany in 1990.³ Memorialisation of the old *Heimat* and flight and expulsion quickly became commonplace in postwar West Germany.⁴ In addition to the erection of monuments there were the staging of *Heimat* days, town-twinning, the naming of streets after the old regions, *Heimatstuben*, *Heimat* books, news-sheets and calendars. Conversely, in East Germany it was officially forbidden to speak of the former homeland until the fall of communism in 1989, following which enthusiastic commemoration soon commenced. Ten major *Ostdeutsche* museums that portray the history and celebrate the culture of the former territories have been founded in Germany as a whole, in addition to innumerable smaller collections. There are eighty-

¹Piepmeyer, Rainer, ‘Philosophische Aspekte des Heimatbegriffs’ in *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Heimat: Analysen, Themen, Perspektiven, Vol 294/I* (Bonn: BpB, 1990), pp. 91-108 (p. 107).

² Figures normally quoted for the number of expellees range from 12 to 14 million, although the highest figure stretches as far as 18 million in von Plato, Alexander and Almut Leh, ‘*Ein unglaublicher Frühling: Erfahrene Geschichte im Nachkriegsdeutschland 1945-1948*’ (Bonn, Bpb, 1997), p. 18. Population transfers had been discussed at the previous conferences of Teheran and Yalta, but details were finalised at Potsdam. Ther, Philipp, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene: Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen 1945-1956* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998), p. 38.

³ Hesse Hans and Elke Purpus identify 1,287 monuments in West Germany and 59 in East Germany. See Hesse and Purpus, ‘Monuments and Commemorative Sites for German Expellees’ in *Memorialization in Germany since 1945* ed. by Bill Niven and Chloe Paver (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 48-57 (p. 49).

⁴ I use West German/y to refer to the old Federal Republic of 1949-1990 and East German/y to refer to the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). When discussing the post-*Wende* situation I use lower case, i.e. west German/y or east German/y.

six *Heimatsammlungen* in Bavaria alone.⁵ Plans are underway for a Sudetenland Museum in Munich. Public interest in the expulsions and aftermath seems more vibrant than ever: a walk round any decently stocked bookshop in Germany in 2013 will reveal a number of topical publications on either the old *Heimat* or the experience of flight and expulsion; the word *Heimat* appears omnipresent.⁶ Television documentaries, travel programmes or dramas about the old *Heimat* or flight and expulsion are also today *en vogue*.⁷

The expulsions, which affected mostly women and children under sixteen, were carried out with great violence; many died in camps from ill-treatment or disease before departure, or they perished on train journeys, or by the roadside as they were forced along.⁸ Numerous people had already fled in fear of the Red Army before being driven out, or had been violently forced out by angry Czechs or Poles in retaliation for German crimes. The *Bundesarchiv* lists the number of deaths en route at 610,000 with 2.2 million people unaccounted for.⁹ Adapting to a new life was far from easy and was characterised by both physical and psychological difficulties.

⁵ Henker, Michael, *Die Heimatsammlungen der Sudeten- und Ostdeutschen in Bayern* (Munich: Landestelle für die nichtstaatlichen Museen in Bayern, 2009).

⁶ Examples include Hilke Lorenz's *Heimat aus dem Koffer: vom Leben nach Flucht und Vertreibung* (2009); Hans-Dieter Rutsch's *Die letzten Deutschen: Schicksale aus Schlesien und Ostpreußen* (2012) and the book accompanying the ARD TV 2-part documentary, Burk, Henning et al, *Fremde Heimat: Das Schicksal der Heimatvertriebenen* (2013).

⁷ See *Die Gustloff* (2008); *Die Flucht* (2007); *Der Sturm* (2004); *Die große Flucht* (2001) which attracted almost five million viewers. Schmitz, Helmut, 'The Birth of the Collective from the Spirit of Empathy: From the "Historians' Dispute" to German Suffering' in *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany* ed. by Bill Niven (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 93-108 (p. 94). In January 2007 MDR1 Radio Sachsen devoted a whole evening to the theme of *Flucht und Vertreibung*, drawing on the experiences of the one million expellees who came to Saxony. See Drewniok, Heinz, *Zweite Heimat Sachsen: Lebenswege deutscher Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen* (Dresden: Edition Sächsische Zeit, 2007).

⁸ Douglas, R. M., *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 1.

⁹ Kossert, Andreas, *Kalte Heimat: Die Geschichte der deutschen Vertriebenen nach 1945* (Munich: Siedler, 2008), p. 41.

Set within this context my comparative study investigates the commemoration of the old *Heimat* and flight and expulsion in post-unification Germany through the means of museums and monuments, looking at motivation, aesthetics and ideology. My methodology combines use of local archival material and literature, fieldwork interviews and a cultural critique of aesthetic representation, and engages with critical discourses of *Heimat*, memory, and art and museum theory. The timing of the project enables me to examine communicative memory as it shifts into cultural memory. Interviews with eyewitnesses have added richness to my study, enabling me, for example, to question the background behind some commemoration and to get a sense of the different environments in which expellees lived. While I acknowledge that the information I gleaned was anecdotal, such detail is important as it enabled me to ascertain personal views and memories in contrast to those evinced in official, public memory. This is particularly valuable in the east German examples. In Jena, for instance, (Chapter Three), mere scrutiny of a monument inscription would not have revealed the complexity behind the memorialisation or shown how the final inscription and location had emerged as a result of negotiation with various authorities over a number of years. Such interview material was crucial in developing the argument that the tension between private and public memory is highly influential in commemoration. My thesis argues that memories are formed and continually reshaped under the influence of the contemporary socio-political context, thus expellees living in East and West Germany were subject to noticeably different persuasions. Since the *Wende* expellees have recalled their *Heimat* and conducted commemoration many decades after the

expulsions, influenced by a German cultural memory landscape that now acknowledges both victims of National Socialism and victims that came about as a consequence of the regime. The tension between ‘German victims’ and ‘victims of the Germans’ is a running theme in this thesis.

Clearly the trajectory towards memorialisation has varied in East and West, something which will be discussed in greater detail later in the thesis. By the end of the 1940s there were 4.3 million expellees in the GDR, representing 24.2% of the population and 7.9 million expellees in West Germany, representing 16.5% of the population.¹⁰ By January 1949 the SBZ (‘Sowjetische Besatzungszone’) had taken 37% of all expellees; the British zone accommodated 32.8%, the American 28% and the French zone 1.4%.¹¹ In both West and East Germany expellees suffered similar flight and expulsion experiences, the loss of the *Heimat*, and assimilation difficulties over a similar number of years. They wanted to commemorate the expulsions as soon as they were able to, using monuments, museums and to a limited extent in the former GDR, *Heimatstuben*, and employed expellee associations to assist this process. Both sets of expellees had experienced generational change and suffered similar trauma, and the length of time since the expulsion and loss of the homeland is the same for East Germans as for West Germans. However, expellee commemoration in the West developed over sixty-eight years in a free society where expellees could discuss the past homeland

¹⁰ Details in tables on p. 27.

¹¹ von Plato, Alexander and Wolfgang Meineke, *Alte Heimat – neue Zeit: Flüchtlinge, Umgesiedelte, Vertriebene in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone und in der DDR* (Berlin: Verlags-Anstalt Union, 1991), p. 25. The French zone took fewer expellees since they did not feel bound by the Potsdam agreement. Schulze, Rainer, ‘The German Refugees and Expellees from the East and the Creation of a Western German Identity after World War Two’ in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* ed. by Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), pp. 307-25 (p. 308).

without restraint and where the concept of *Heimat* was rehabilitated after the *Blut und Boden* tarnishing by Nazi ideology. Expellee integration was still difficult, though, and passed through several stages over many years. In the East, expellees lived in a totalitarian state where a public taboo on discussion of the old homeland was enforced (although private discussion within the family and close circles took place) and integration into a new socialist *Heimat* was obligatory and swift but also problematic. After unification East German expellees had another new *Heimat*, a capitalist, West German-dominated society.

Previous research on the expulsions has concentrated predominantly on the expellees who resettled in West Germany. Through detailed analysis of four federal states, Bavaria and Schleswig-Holstein in West Germany and Saxony and Thuringia in East Germany this study enables a close examination of memorial practices in the former GDR to be exposed and contrasted with the longer established West German commemorative traditions. My comparative thesis highlights the sheer persistence of *Heimat* for expellees in both east and west Germany, despite pre-*Wende* attempts by the GDR authorities to repress discussion about the old homeland, and the use of *Heimat* rhetoric to infuse an attachment to a new socialist *Heimat*. Almost seventy years after the expulsions east and west German expellees still take part in memorial activities, the specific form of the memorialisation reflecting the contemporary cultural memory landscape of the time of commemoration. The old *Heimat* remains unforgotten, preserved as an emotional element of identity, even for the German nation, as evidenced by the colossal amounts of

government funding dedicated over decades and continuing, to preserving the culture of the lost eastern territories.¹²

Broadly summarised, my research indicates that fewer children and grandchildren in east Germany are interested in the old *Heimat* than in west Germany, and fewer artefacts from the pre-1945 past have been retained than in the West. There are far fewer *Heimatstuben*, though *Ostdeutsche* museums have been founded. In eastern memorials the theme of *Heimat* rarely features and use of symbolism to connote the old homeland is rare. Monuments are often sited in out-of-the-way places, such as cemeteries. Coats of arms that signify a pride in the old homeland are seldom used. Generally, in east German monument inscriptions expellee suffering is mostly placed within a broader context of wartime suffering. Reconciliation appears a more usual framing in east German commemoration than in west German memorialisation, which has changed over the years. Early memorials in West Germany that clearly acknowledge expellee suffering and yearning for the old *Heimat* developed into the use of monuments to thank the new *Heimat* or expellees for their contribution to it. Nevertheless, post-*Wende*, west German commemoration still features wording or symbolism that denotes pride in the old *Heimat* in the form of inscriptions which sometimes could be taken as revanchist and there remains an over-riding sense of the victimhood of the expellees.

My fieldwork and analysis reveal an interesting tension between communicative and cultural memory, and illustrate how although cultural memory sets the parameters in which communicative memory takes place, the

¹² For details see pp. 78, 103, 226 and 351.

latter everyday memory can be in conflict with official memory. While some theories suggest that generational turnaround, or trauma, are key drivers of cultural memory,¹³ this thesis argues that socio-political changes engendered changing memory waves in West Germany and that it is the socio-political context that determines cultural memory which frames any commemoration. Thus, east German commemoration in monuments indicates a heightened sense of responsibility reflecting a later stance in cultural memory, the sense that stand-alone expellee suffering is inappropriate. Additionally, after unification, as east German society merged into the dominant west German society, expellees called on their lost *Heimat* roots to strengthen their identity and in a parallel to the origins of the *Heimat* concept at the end of the nineteenth century, to offset hyper-modernity. Nonetheless, the use of *Heimat* as a term is generally avoided in public commemoration, which is influenced by local political contexts, as it is associated with revisionist rhetoric and, to an extent, with Nazi ideology. West German expellees' memories, too, were framed by the contemporary socio-political context but the reshaping of their memories had taken place over decades of fluctuating discourse in which they had been able to openly discuss *Heimat*, and the notion of themselves as victims, resulting in some differentiation of commemoration to that exhibited in the East.

In west German *Heimatstuben* the old *Heimat* is preserved as a fantasy, as a ghostly presence evoked through authentic artefacts. In east Germany on the other hand, the old *Heimat* is mostly replicated though

¹³ See, for example, Schmitz, Helmut, 'Introduction: The Return of Wartime Suffering in Contemporary German Memory Culture, Literature and Film' in *A Nation of Victims? Representations of German Wartime Suffering from 1945 to the Present* ed. by Helmut Schmitz (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 1-30 (pp. 1-17).

reconstructed artefacts, simulacra of the past. In exhibitions, and indeed memorials, the commemorative memory of expellees at times infiltrates the presentation of cultural memory resulting in contention and sometimes presenting politically problematic background information. Although rather different fora and having different aims, the *Ostdeutsche* museums, *Heimatstuben* and the Berlin *Stiftung Flucht Vertreibung Versöhnung* (SFVV) Centre all perpetuate a sense of pride in the old *Heimat*, indicating that the idea of the German East is retained as a psychological component of identity.

1. Overview of Thesis

This introductory chapter briefly sets out the research pattern on the topic to date followed by a historical overview of the expulsions and their aftermath. Chapter One outlines the history of *Heimat* discourse (concentrating particularly on the postwar West German experience), as well as key components of the concept that relate to expellees such as loss, identity and use of icons to support memory. I argue that for expellees nowadays the old *Heimat* is primarily not territorial, rather an integral part of identity sustained through loss and transmogrified through symbolic representation in the second *Heimat*. Chapter Two concerns theories of cultural memory. I discuss the waves of memory that occurred in West Germany and correlate this with commemorative activity. East Germany on the other hand exhibited a less nuanced collective memory until the *Wende*, with no memorialisation until 1992. *Heimat* discourse was used throughout the lifetime of the GDR to assist the formation and maintenance of the socialist republic. I refute the claim of a taboo on expellee suffering in West Germany while acknowledging that the

topic was instrumentalised and discussed without much public sympathy from the end of the 1960s to the mid-1980s.

Chapter Three draws on my fieldwork and focuses on monuments in four federal states: Schleswig-Holstein (94 monuments), Bavaria (354 monuments), Saxony (29 monuments) and Thuringia (34 monuments). In my chosen states there are 61 post-*Wende* west German monuments compared to 63 east German ones. My selected regions have high-density expellee populations which cover a cross-section of old expellee lands. Geographically they comprise the northern, middle and southern parts of Germany that were governed in the early postwar period by three allied powers, Schleswig-Holstein by the British, Bavaria by the Americans, and Saxony and Thuringia by the Soviets. To encompass Germany as a whole is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, to illustrate certain points I include examples from other federal states. I initially discuss monuments erected between 1947 and 1989 by expellees who settled in West Germany which are used to mourn, replace, reflect on, and revere the old *Heimat*. I then compare post-*Wende* east and west German memorials and discuss key differences. I additionally consider changing memorial sites in West Germany, compare monuments in three cemeteries and a green space that illustrate a changing integration process and investigate the use of symbolism, including the female body.

Chapter Four considers representation of the old *Heimat* and the events of flight and expulsion in museums and *Heimatstuben*. I compare three major *Ostdeutsche* museums: the new *Schlesisches Museum*, Görlitz and the *Pommersches Landesmuseum*, Greifswald in east Germany with the long-established *Ostpreußisches Landesmuseum* in Lüneburg, west Germany. I

discuss the market-driven Regensburg *Ostdeutsche Galerie*, west Germany, and compare two exhibitions about expellee integration: *Fremdes Zuhause* (2009-2010), *Freilichtmuseum Molfsee*, west Germany; and *Vertreibung und Integration*, *Gehren Heimatstube*, east Germany. I show how artefacts portray the old *Heimat* in *Heimatstuben* in Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Altenburg, Saxony, and finally discuss the *Altvaterturm* in Thuringia, a hybrid monument/museum that strives for a reconciliatory depiction of wartime suffering but leaves an overwhelming impression of German victimhood. Generally, in both east and west Germany, the more intensively expellees are involved in establishments, the less contextually balanced appear the exhibitions. Pride in the old *Heimat* appears in all museal presentations, most evident in *Heimatstuben* as a revered phantom presence and more covertly in museum narratives as a German heritage.

My penultimate chapter considers the tension between cultural and communicative memory and moves the focus to an international level. I examine the background and ongoing controversy regarding the Berlin SFVV Centre (first mooted in 1999 by the *Bund der Vertriebenen* (BdV) as a Centre against Expulsions) agreed by the *Bundestag* in 2008, but not yet finalised. I argue that although German, Czech and Polish citizens can work harmoniously and productively on sites of memory together at a local level, when debate takes place at a national level where the portrayal of history set out as cultural memory performs a normative function then controversy flourishes, particularly when Germans as victims are under discussion. Tactless public statements of expellee representatives act as a barrier to the European reconciliation that is an aim of the project.

My conclusions illustrate the durability of the term *Heimat* and how it is still an emotive concept for expellees today, but generally in a psychological sense. I demonstrate that memorialisation continues, influenced by the contemporary socio-political context. Finally, I show the resilience of the overall regard for the lost territories and how German cultural memory persists in retaining them as part of a Germanic cultural legacy.

2. Research to date on the Expulsions and Aftermath

Encompassing both popular and academic publications, the breadth of literature on the expulsions is remarkable. West Germany in the 1950s and 1960s saw the publication of a number of quasi-academic studies conducted by affected parties, which Pertti Ahonen refers to as ‘typically partisan’ in nature, as might be expected given the temporal proximity to the expulsions.¹⁴ Following a decline in publishing on the subject in the 1970s and early 1980s, a more nuanced academic scholarship developed from the late 1980s onwards. Some later research, for example, focused on challenging what had been called successful integration, particularly examining the often hostile relationships between expellees and the local population.¹⁵

East German research into the expulsions scarcely existed in the 1950s and 1960s, mostly due to sensitivity regarding potential anti-Soviet implications and censorship. According to Philipp Ther, research commenced after the easing of the taboo in the 1970s and before this time memoirs and

¹⁴ Ahonen, Pertti, *After the Expulsion: West Germany and Eastern Europe 1945-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 3.

¹⁵ See, for example, Kossert, Andreas, *Kalte Heimat*.

literary forms existed only in the private sphere.¹⁶ More recent research, however, reveals published novels, plays or poetry in the 1950s and 1960s that mention, or work with, the topic of expulsion.¹⁷ Cautious scholarship and some public debate took place in the 1980s, although research intensified, and significant academic literature appeared only after the fall of communism.¹⁸

Many detailed regional and local studies point out expellees' difficulties, highlighting problems of finding accommodation, food and work, as well as the struggle to overcome discrimination.¹⁹ In addition to early accounts many expellees chose to write up their experiences in later years, as a form of commemoration or with a therapeutic aim, and although such versions are largely uncorroborated or anecdotal in approach the sources are useful, especially with regard to how the old and new *Heimaten* are perceived.²⁰ Klaus Hupp, who appears to have integrated well into Schleswig-Holstein although he comments that the process took until 1963, writes in his 2000 account of the old *Heimat* in Köslin, East Prussia, still being 'der Ort in unserer Seele'.²¹ Early life in the new *Heimat* in the Kiel area is the centrepiece of his writing. Conversely, Walter Weber's 1998 account

¹⁶ Ther, p. 23. The appearance of Christa Wolf's *Kindheitsmuster* is credited with breaking the taboo in the 1970s. Ther, p. 328.

¹⁷ Kossert, pp. 290-300.

¹⁸ Ahonen, p. 2. Universities like Leipzig, Magdeburg, Humboldt-Berlin began researching the integration problems in the 1980s. Wille, Manfred, Johannes Hoffmann and Wolfgang Meineke (eds.) *Sie hatten alles verloren: Flucht und Vertreibung in der SBZ Deutschlands* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), p. 7.

¹⁹ Examples in my chosen areas include Bauer, Franz, *Flüchtlinge und Flüchtlingspolitik in Bayern 1945-1950* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), Wertz, Renate L., *Die Vertriebenen in Schleswig-Holstein: Aufnahme und Eingliederung* (Kiel: Schmidt und Klaunig, 1988) and Wille, Manfred, *Gehasst und Umsorgt: Aufnahme und Eingliederung der Vertriebenen in Thüringen* (Stadtroda: UND-Verlag, 2006).

²⁰ The word *Heimat* has no official plural, though speakers agree that the plural would be 'Heimaten'. The lack of an official plural perhaps indicates that only one is possible, and indeed expellees often refer to their old homeland as 'die Heimat' even though they have lived elsewhere for decades.

²¹ Hupp, Klaus, *Als die Flüchtlinge nach Kiel kamen* (Husum: Husum Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft, 2000), p. 170.

concentrates on his convoluted treks westward over time, from Johnsdorf, Silesia to his eventual new *Heimat* in Mühlhausen, Thuringia. He and the other villagers' ties to the old *Heimat* were so strong that following the initial flight in January 1945 they regrouped and attempted to remain in Silesia, being driven out finally in 1947.²²

A detailed analysis of notable scholarship is beyond the scope of this introduction, however, key texts include Ahonen's study of the political dimensions and expellee organisations which illustrates the centrality of the expellee theme to West German political development,²³ and Ther's study of East German and Polish expellees which aims to rectify the failure of previous research to contextualise the expulsions. Polish expellees resulted from the pushing westwards of the boundaries of Poland at the Potsdam Conference and in a double expulsion a number of Polish expellees from what then became part of the Soviet Union took over the accommodation of expelled Germans.²⁴ Prior to Ther's research, the Polish expulsions had been somewhat neglected and indeed the West German position has still been researched much more thoroughly than the East German, a position my research will help to develop. My own comparative study highlights the centrality and durability of the concept of *Heimat* in expellee discourse, especially with regard to the focus on the old *Heimat* in memorialisation, an area as yet little explored in research on the expulsions.

The relationship between the locality and the nation has been widely explored in academic discourse. For instance, Celia Applegate argues that the notion of *Heimat* allows Germans to harmonise beloved local traditions with

²² Weber, Walter, *Westwärts: Mein Schicksal nach dem 2. Weltkrieg* (Plauen: Satzart, 1998).

²³ Ahonen, p. 5.

²⁴ Ther, p. 14.

the singular, more impersonal nation; Alon Confino claims that the idea of *Heimat* became a simultaneous portrayal of the locality, the territorial state, and the nation, and Jan Palmowski asserts that the concept of *Heimat* was central to the SED's socialist policy in the formation of a new nation.²⁵ While my study also considers the correlation between *Heimat* and the nation, it concentrates on a three-way relationship between the nation, the new *Heimat* and the old *Heimat*. My thesis develops the findings of Andrew Demshuk's recent study of Silesian refugees who settled in West Germany which argues that most expellees steadily cultivated two *Heimaten*, the physical, now 'foreign space' that was lost and the 'idealized realm', always available in their minds.²⁶ To this I add a third *Heimat*, the new one in which they resettled. My research suggests that although expellees realised that their old *Heimat* was changing beyond recognition from the one they had inhabited they still retained the old *Heimat* as one entity in their minds, and do so even today, perceiving it as a utopia in comparison to the new *Heimat*. Moreover I would argue that such utopian imagining persists, even though as time passed most expellees did not really want to return despite the rhetoric of expellee leaders.

My thesis builds on recent studies which depict the problems of expellee resettlement, despite 1950s' claims of integration success.²⁷ I demonstrate how expellees used memorialisation in West Germany as a means to assert

²⁵ Applegate, Celia, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), p. 11. Confino, Alon, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 56. Palmowski, Jan, *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 13.

²⁶ Demshuk, Andrew, *The lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 2-3.

²⁷ See, for example, Kossert and Burk et al.

their distinctive cultural identity against the locals and indeed still do so, thus my findings corroborate the long-lasting assimilation difficulties identified by recent scholarship. While early memorials were used by expellees as a marker of cultural distinctiveness to assert their own value as newcomers to the *Heimat* and offset claims of being unworthy *Fremde*, later commemorative attempts are efforts of community pride, like the Rendsburg *Heimatstube* I discuss in Chapter Four that strives to convey a historical narrative to possibly uninformed locals or tourists. My study confirms the place of *Heimat* as a central component of identity as identified by scholars Hermann Bausinger and Peter Blickle: ‘Heimat is not only like identity, it *is* identity’.²⁸ I show how a focus on the old *Heimat* sustained expellee identity and expellees appeared capable of developing parallel *Heimaten*, in the West from 1945, and equally in the East, although this identity was held in suspension, unable to be publicly acknowledged until after the *Wende*, and then in a different form from that evidenced in the west.

My in-depth comparative study makes a distinctive contribution to the under-researched field of the expulsions and aftermath in the GDR; widespread and detailed research on this topic began only after the fall of communism. Most studies have either focused entirely on expellees who settled in West Germany or have less comprehensively examined the GDR position.²⁹ Unlike other scholars working in the field of expellee

²⁸ Bausinger, Hermann, ‘Heimat und Identität’ in *Heimat und Identität: Probleme regionaler Kultur: 22. Deutscher Volkskunde – Kongreß in Kiel von 16. bis 21. Juni 1979* ed. by Konrad Köstlin and Hermann Bausinger (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1980), pp. 9-25 (p. 9). Quote from Blickle, his emphasis in *A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester: Camden House, 2002), p. 66.

²⁹ See, for example, Connor, Ian, *Refugees and Expellees in post-war Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007) and Lotz, Christian, *Die Deutung des Verlusts: Erinnerungspolitische Kontroversen im geteilten Deutschland um Flucht, Vertreibung und die Ostgebiete (1948-1972)* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007).

commemoration (for example, Jeffrey Luppés's politically-focused study of monuments; Stephan Scholz's investigation of motifs of gender and religion in memorials; Cornelia Eisler's and Tim Völkerling's work on *Heimatstuben* and museums), I interrogate *Heimat* as an organising principle for memorialisation.³⁰ While other studies deal primarily with West German commemoration and make reference to *Heimat* as a commemorative characteristic my study uses *Heimat* as an investigatory framework, systematically contrasts both east and West German memorialisation and demonstrates that the old *Heimat* is still a key element of this discourse. My thesis confirms Eisler's view of 1950s and 1960s *Heimatstuben* as identity support mechanisms for expellees and I carry forward this observation with respect to later *Heimatstuben* which seek to develop a distinctive expellee identity in a way that is consistent with a post-*Wende* climate of European reconciliation. I build on Scholz's analysis of the use of figures of women and children in expellee memorials to signify Germans as innocent victims, and concur with his point that such female forms are highly evocative of *Heimat*, viewed as traditionally feminine and maternal. However, I take Scholz's view further and develop a more nuanced and wide-ranging reading of the

³⁰ Luppés, Jeffrey P., 'To Our Dead: Local Expellee Monuments and the Contestation of German Postwar Memory' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 2010), http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/78786/jluppés_1.pdf?sequence=1 [accessed 9 December 2012]; Scholz, Stephan, "'Opferdunst vernebelt die Verhältnisse' – Religiöse Motive in bundesdeutschen Gedenkorten der Flucht und Vertreibung", in *Schweizerischen Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte*, 102 (2008), 287-313; Scholz, "'Als die Frauen ihren Mann stehen mussten": Geschlechtermotive im bundesdeutschen Vertreibungsdiskurs' in *Ariadne: Forum für Frauen- und Geschlechtergeschichte*, 59 (2011), 32-37; Eisler, Cornelia, 'Die "verlorene Heimat im Osten" in den Heimatstuben der deutschen Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen' in *Eine Ästhetik des Verlusts: Bilder von Heimat, Flucht und Vertreibung* ed. by Elisabeth Fendl (Münster: Waxmann, 2011), pp. 125-39; Völkerling, Tim, 'Die Musealisierung der Themen Flucht, Vertreibung und Integration: Analysen zur Debatte um einen musealen Gedenkort und zu historischen Ausstellungen seit 1950' in *Eine Ästhetik des Verlusts* ed. by Fendl, pp. 71-124.

particular significance of female figures in different contexts including the specific context of east German memorialisation. I show how public and private memories have interacted to foreground different aspects of the expellee relationship with *Heimat*: emphasising victimhood; humility; strength and resolution; solace and steadfastness of memory. Luppès's study of over a thousand expellee monuments aims to uncover the original commemorative intention of the memorials. Like Scholz he stresses their purpose to emphasise German suffering; monuments display 'exculpatory assertions of victimhood and collective innocence' or *Heimat* loss and subsequent territorial claims.³¹ Luppès believes these narratives are based on popular memories 'from below' not those imposed 'from above' through official discourse.³² His 385-page dissertation contains just three pages of discussion about east German memorialisation. My thesis goes beyond Luppès's study and my comparative analysis of east and west German commemoration, deploying a methodology that comprises scrutiny of public discourses, archival material, aesthetic representation and interviews with lay historians, professional curators and eyewitnesses demonstrates that memorialisation evinces a hybridity of influences 'from above' and 'from below'. For example, the outpouring of east German commemoration after the *Wende* sometimes follows west German patterns, but it attempts to negotiate a different political climate resulting in a peculiar mix of *Heimat* memorialisation where lots of different stages are happening simultaneously. The suspended private *Heimat* thoughts of east German expellees were held in abeyance but not forgotten in an environment where no public outlook was

³¹ Luppès, p. 10.

³² Ibid., p. 9.

permitted. Such thoughts are then exhibited post-*Wende* in a climate where a pan-European discourse of human rights and a striving to prevent future expulsions or ethnic cleansing, plus a desire for reconciliation with Germany's neighbours is at the forefront. This results in three categories of hybridity: a synthesis where memories 'from above' and 'from below' meet in a harmonious blend (as in the memorial in Radeberg or the *Heimatstube* in Altenburg); uneasy coexistence, where there is an attempt to bring tensions and differences together (as in the monument in Jena); and jarring discord where unresolved tensions and discontinuities are exhibited (as in the case of the *Altvaterturm* in Thuringia). While the interaction between memories 'from above' and 'from below' is most obvious in east German memorialisation my comparative study also demonstrates this negotiation in some West German commemoration, notably in the Lüneburg museum that I discuss in Chapter Four where tension is revealed between professional curators and eyewitnesses, and in changing monument sites like those at Mölln and Oberschleißheim that I discuss in Chapter Three.

3. From the Old *Heimat* to the New

My purpose in this section is to summarise the historical context for the memorialisation, outlining differences and similarities between East and West Germany. Expellees left mostly rural and prosperous regions to enter war-torn lands where there was an acute shortage of accommodation, food, transport and work. The contrast between the old and new *Heimat* was stark and the journey between the two was an ordeal. Expellees included *Reichsdeutsche*, those indigenous Germans living within the 1937 boundary of the greater

German *Reich*, such as Silesia, East Prussia and parts of Pomerania, and also *Volksdeutsche*, minority groups like the Transylvanian Saxons who had lived in Romania for centuries. Moreover, ethnic Germans were expelled from territories that had been German but were given to Poland after the First World War like Danzig, Posen and a large part of West Prussia, and also from the Sudetenland, annexed by the Nazis in 1938 and given back to Czechoslovakia in 1945. The Anglo-American and Soviet allies' aims were similar, to assimilate the expellees as quickly as possible and prevent instability. Both sets of authorities tried to split up family and territorial groupings in order to accelerate integration.³³ But there is evidence that this merely added to the anguish. Rainer Schulze notes the traumatic effect on expellees' sense of identity as traditional bonds and customs were eroded.³⁴

A number of terms were used in West Germany for the people who were driven out, or who fled before being compelled to leave, amongst them *Aussiedler*, *Umsiedler*, *Flüchtlinge*, *Vertriebene*, *Heimatvertriebene*, *Ostvertriebene*, but I am choosing to use the word expellees generically and for simplification in my thesis to additionally cover the term refugees. Although technically speaking refugees are those who fled, rather than being forced out, the terms *Flüchtlinge* and *Vertriebene* are often used synonymously. Initially the first term was preferred before the founding of West Germany but later *Vertriebene* became more commonplace.³⁵ The term expellee in my view more accurately reflects the situation as the word refugee

³³ Kossert cites an extreme example of 2,000 *Donauschwaben* from the same *Gemeinde* who were located into 158 different places in the FRG. Kossert, p. 56.

³⁴ Schulze, Rainer, 'Growing Discontent: Relations between Native and Refugee Populations in a Rural District in Western Germany after the Second World War' in *West Germany under Reconstruction: Politics, Society and Culture in the Adenauer Era*, ed. by Robert G. Moeller (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 53-72 (p. 56).

³⁵ Wertz, p. 19.

does not recognise that although people may have initially chosen to flee, they were, in most cases, prevented from returning to their homeland by the decision reached at Potsdam. Uwe Danker and Astrid Schwabe point out the preference often accorded by expellees to the word *Vertriebene* as it emphasises the forced nature of the event.³⁶ According to Andreas Kossert, the American occupiers opted to use the term expellee from 1947 in order to reiterate there was no hope of return; additionally the 1953 *Bundesvertriebenengesetz* (BVFG) reserved the term refugee for those fleeing the SBZ, which became the GDR in 1949.³⁷ From the outset expellees were named *Umsiedler* in the SBZ, as if to imply a sense of choice in the matter.

Figures for the number of expellees understandably vary, due to the chaos engendered by the expulsions and aftermath. Furthermore, expellees often chose to relocate or were forced to move once they had arrived.³⁸ For this reason I use figures from late 1949/1950, which also coincides with the erection of the first monuments.

Expellees as % of East German Population as of 19 April 1949			
State	Total population	Expellees	Expellees as %
Brandenburg	2,646,991	655,466	24.8
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	2,126,790	922,088	43.3
Saxony	5,798,990	997,798	17.2
Saxony-Anhalt	4,303,441	1,051,024	24.4
Thuringia	2,988,288	685,913	23.0
GDR	17,864,500	4,312,289	24.2

Wille, Manfred, *Die Vertriebenen in der SBZ/DDR Dokumente, II Massentransfer, Wohnen, Arbeit 1946-1949* (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1999), p. 147. Source: BArch, DO2, Nr. 18, Bl. 146.

³⁶ Danker, Uwe and Astrid Schwabe, *Schleswig-Holstein und der Nationalsozialismus* (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 2005), p. 167.

³⁷ Kossert, p. 10.

³⁸ Federal states frequently tried to refuse expellees as they rapidly became aware of the ensuing burden. This had a serious effect on often completely exhausted new arrivals as they were moved around. Ther cites the 1945 example of Saxony driving newcomers away by boat down the Elbe or in lorries to other federal states. Ther, p. 117.

Expellees in FRG according to Federal State in 1950 and 1955				
<i>Bundesland</i>	Expellees			
	As at 13 September 1950		As at 31 December 1955	
	Number	% total pop'n.	Number	% total pop'n.
Schleswig-Hol.	856,943	33.0	622,200	27.3
Hamburg	115,981	7.2	187,600	10.5
Niedersachsen	1,851,472	27.2	1,673,600	25.6
Bremen	48,183	8.6	81,800	12.8
NRW	1,331,959	10.1	2,081,400	14.0
Hessen	720,583	16.7	811,500	17.7
Rheinland-Pf.	152,267	5.1	262,200	7.9
Baden-Württ.	861,526	13.4	1,207,100	16.9
Bayern	1,937,297	21.1	1,828,800	19.9
Total	7,876,211	16.5	8,756,200	17.4

Wertz, p. 22. Source: Frantziach, 1987.

3.1 Similarities: Accommodation, Work, Discrimination

Most cities and large towns had suffered severe war damage, therefore most expellees were allocated to small towns or villages, although the October 1946 census records that even though 80% of Schleswig-Holstein's main city, Kiel, had been destroyed, 1,222,258 expellees lived there alongside 1,484,863 locals.³⁹ Expellees in Schleswig-Holstein lived with relatives if they were lucky, otherwise they shared accommodation with locals in often uncomfortably intimate situations or had to live in Nissen-huts, school halls, village dance-halls, bowling alleys, beach huts, workshops, caravans, dedicated 'temporary' camps, ships and even caves.⁴⁰ To give the illusion of individual space sometimes sacks, paper walls or chalk-lines were used to separate out living space.⁴¹ Conditions took many years to improve. In April 1950 there were still 127,456 refugees living in 728 camps in Schleswig-Holstein and thirteen years after the expulsions, in December 1958, 27,350

³⁹ Danker and Schwabe, p. 166.

⁴⁰ In 1950 there were still 58 camps in Kiel, 67 in Eckernförde, 35 in Eutin and 72 in Rendsburg. Carstens, Uwe, *Die Flüchtlingslager der Stadt Kiel: Sammelunterkünfte als Desintegrierender Faktor der Flüchtlingspolitik* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1992), p. 21.

⁴¹ Wertz, p. 47.

people still lived in 210 camps.⁴² The last camp was only cleared in West Germany in the early 1970s.⁴³

Expellees throughout the two Germanies were unevenly distributed, which created more problems; in some areas there were more expellees than locals.⁴⁴ Holzhausen on the *Starnberger See*, Bavaria, for instance, accommodated 824 newcomers on top of its 561 local inhabitants.⁴⁵ As in Schleswig-Holstein three-quarters of the expellees lived in the countryside.⁴⁶

Percentage of Expellees in Bavaria according to pop'n distribution, 1949	
Towns with over 100,000 people	6.1%
Towns with 20,000-100,000 people	7.9%
Towns with 10,000-20,000 people	4.8%
Towns with 4,000-10,000 people	11.1%
Towns with under 4,000 people	70.1%

Bauer, p. 28.

Partly due to its geographical location, the SBZ took proportionately more expellees yet these territories were also among the most heavily damaged, particularly in the last weeks of the war.⁴⁷ At the end of the war 1,500 large businesses and 800 small and medium businesses had been destroyed; the estimated industrial production of the territory was a mere 10-15% of the prewar level.⁴⁸ Moreover, reparations extracted by the Soviet leaders and dismantling of industry made matters worse. The townsfolk of Greifswald complained bitterly as the rail-tracks were dismantled and removed to the USSR: 'Früher fuhren die Züge auf den Schienen – heute

⁴² Statistisches Landesamt Schleswig-Holstein, *Das Flüchtlingsgeschehen in Schleswig-Holstein infolge des 2. Weltkrieges im Spiegel der amtlichen Statistik* (Kiel: 1974), p. 96.

⁴³ Schmidt-Phiseldeck, Kerstin, 'Wir haben nur vorwärts geschaut', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 2 May 2009, p. 18.

⁴⁴ Wertz, p. 32.

⁴⁵ Habbe, Christian, 'Der zweite lange Marsch' in *Die Flucht: Über die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten* ed. by Stefan Aust and Stephan Burgdorff, (Bonn: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2003), pp. 225-36 (p. 233).

⁴⁶ Bauer, p. 28.

⁴⁷ Wille, Manfred, 'Compelling the Assimilation of Expellees in the Soviet Zone of Occupation and the GDR' in *Redrawing Nations* ed. by Ther and Siljak, pp. 263-83 (p. 264).

⁴⁸ von Plato and Meineke, p. 29.

fahren die Schienen auf den Zügen'.⁴⁹ Initially the situation was chaotic but by early 1946 358 reception centres had been established in the SBZ, capable of housing 347,816 people, although these were often horrendously overcrowded.⁵⁰ As in West Germany, many people were reallocated from urban emergency accommodation into rural areas or smaller towns. Thus 47% of all expellees lived in villages of up to 2,000 residents and 22% lived in towns of between 2,000 and 10,000 residents.⁵¹

The housing of expellees in the countryside in all occupied zones meant there were fewer employment opportunities. Not only was work essential for financial reasons, it formed an important part of self-regard, seen in *Heimat* discourse as playing a role in engendering an affiliation to the *Heimat*. According to the philosopher and *Heimat* theoretician Eduard Spranger, a feeling for the *Heimat* is strengthened, not just by the act of being born there but also by growing together with the land, and once labour has been invested in a territory, it is more likely to be regarded as a *Heimat*.⁵² Spranger's 1926 concept of the *Heimat* bond forged by an investment of labour in the land implies a conception of *Heimat* consistent with a socialist take on *Heimat*, in line, for example, with the conclusion to Brecht's *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* where the land goes to those whose work will see it flourish.⁵³ Spranger, however, developed his view of *Heimat* along racial lines in the

⁴⁹ Matthiesen, Helge, 'Greifswald unter sowjetischer Besatzung und in der DDR' in *Greifswald: Geschichte der Stadt* ed. by Horst Wernicke (Schwerin: Helms, 2000), pp. 141-58 (p. 142).

⁵⁰ Ther, p. 119.

⁵¹ von Plato and Meineke, p. 51.

⁵² Boa, Elizabeth and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat - A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 6. An example of this understanding of *Heimat* can be seen in the film *Der verlorene Sohn* (Luis Trenker, 1934) which shows Tonio, in his alpine setting, felling timber and taking over the plough from his father, exemplifying the role of the *Heimat* son. Many expellees, of course, occupied urban spaces, not the rural ones epitomised by this example.

⁵³ Boa and Palfreyman, p. 6.

1930s and 1940s deploying the concept of *Volk* and the Nazi vocabulary of racial hygiene in his understanding of the bond between people and land.⁵⁴

The socialist take on *Heimat* whereby affiliation was achieved through work was evident in the attempted forced integration process of the expellees in the GDR. The first edition of *Die neue Heimat* magazine published in May 1947, which contains attempts to inculcate a sense of belonging, included an article by Elfriede Brüning, about the founding of a collective in Zinna: ‘Glas und Glück, ein Dorf sucht den Weg zur Welt’ which concluded ‘Weshalb sollen wir jammern? [...] Wo ich meine Arbeit habe, da bin ich zu Hause’.⁵⁵

Throughout both Germanies in towns where there was work, there was often no accommodation. Typically there was a mismatch of skills, for example those living on farms may not have been farm labourers but skilled workers.⁵⁶ Many expellees were downgraded to manual worker status in Schleswig-Holstein compared to their previous status in the old *Heimat*; before the expulsions 37.8% had been manual workers whereas afterwards the figure was 71%.⁵⁷ In Bavaria unemployment figures for 1947-48 showed 35.3% expellees out of work although proportionately they represented 20% of the population.⁵⁸ Less than a third of those in work were reportedly happy with their job and social position.⁵⁹ Similarly in the SBZ, expellees’ sense of dislocation was exacerbated by the lack of work or unsuitable work and it was not unusual for skilled tradesmen or master craftsmen to have to work as

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ BArch, ZB 4791a, 1947, 1.

⁵⁶ Bauer, p. 205.

⁵⁷ Wertz, p. 60.

⁵⁸ Bauer, p. 212.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 219.

journeymen or labourers.⁶⁰ As the *Wirtschaftswunder* got underway in West Germany from the mid-1950s the new economic climate meant there were more opportunities for expellees to find more suitable employment, and to build up their self-esteem and status by the purchase of new cars, a house and consumer goods, which aided assimilation, though none of these opportunities were available in the GDR.⁶¹ However, expellees in both lands strove to rebuild their lives through investment in work wherever possible and their endeavours have been recognised as a major factor in the rebuilding of the economies on both sides of the border, noted, for instance, in some commemoration.⁶²

In addition to the physical discomfort of living conditions, which were in extreme contrast to the old *Heimat*, expellees suffered often from spiritual dislocation as Catholics settled in Protestant areas or vice versa. Religious problems affected many communities in Bavaria as expellees were randomly allocated, upsetting a religious balance of communities which had been in place for centuries.⁶³ Of the 1,424 purely Catholic communities in Bavaria prior to 1945, only twenty-seven remained so after the influx of expellees.⁶⁴ Expellees felt discriminated against as they were often forced to stand at the back of the local church where family pews had been allocated for years; churches frequently ran two services to accommodate two religions.⁶⁵ Numerous Catholics from Silesia, Hungary and the Sudetenland altered the

⁶⁰ von Plato and Meineke, p. 67.

⁶¹ Bauer, p. 388.

⁶² Monuments in Karlsfeld and Nürnberg publicly thank the expellees for their role in the rebuilding of Bavaria.

⁶³ Gatz, Karen L., *East Prussian and Sudetengerman Expellees in West Germany 1945-1960: A Comparison of their Social and Cultural Integration* (Ann Arbor, 1989), p. 45.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 45.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 46.

equilibrium in the hitherto predominantly Protestant GDR.⁶⁶ In mostly Protestant Schleswig-Holstein there was more of a religious match amongst incoming expellees, 86.3% of whom were Protestant and 10.4% Catholic, which assisted integration in this respect.⁶⁷

A major problem was conflict between locals and expellees. The indigenous population, particularly in traditional rural areas generally resented the newcomers; they felt they had enough problems of their own before the new arrivals, and they perceived that the influx would affect their living standards and culture. While Arnold Wicke's investigation into Eckernförde portrays a fairly harmonious integration process with a two-way sharing of each other's customs and traditions between locals and newcomers through social events,⁶⁸ this is a rarity. Locals worried that the newcomers would use up available resources. The 4.3 million expellees in the SBZ, for example, who represented 24.2% of the population, laid claim to almost 43% of the social support, somewhat attributable to the over-proportionate number of children amongst the expellees.⁶⁹ Discrimination was widespread but there was also local variation; according to Kurt Jürgensen, top positions in Schleswig-Holstein administration went overwhelmingly to new settlers.⁷⁰ However, a study in the Sandkrug School in Eckernförde shows the clear

⁶⁶ Schwab, Irina, *'Neue Heimat – Neues Leben'? Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in Leipzig 1945 bis zum Beginn der 50er Jahre* (Leipzig: Leipzig Universitätsverlag, 1999), p. 6. The amount of Catholics in Saxony increased from 4.5% in 1939 to 8.1% in 1946. Ther, p. 289.

⁶⁷ Wertz, p. 50.

⁶⁸ Wicke, Arnold, *Das Schicksal der Heimatvertriebenen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges im ehemaligen Kreis Eckernförde: Dokumentarischer Bericht über die ersten Notjahre aus der Sicht von Ärzten, amtlichen und freiwilligen Hilfskräften* (Eckernförde: Heimatgemeinschaft Eckernförde e.V., 1979), p. 144.

⁶⁹ Schwartz, Michael, 'Staatsfeind "Umsiedler"' in *Die Flucht* ed. by Aust and Burgdorff, pp. 205-15 (p. 206).

⁷⁰ Jürgensen, Kurt, 'Schleswig-Holstein nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg: Kontinuität und Wandel' in *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Ulrich Lange (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1996), p. 591.

preference for locals in any personnel decisions.⁷¹ Faced with such difficulties expellees began to regard their old *Heimat* as a lost paradise when comparing it to the difficulties of their new one. If anything, according to Schulze, local hostility somewhat increased as they realised the expellees would not return home.⁷²

3.2 Differences: Assimilation and *Heimat* Identity

Similarities in postwar conditions between East and West Germany like accommodation, employment and discrimination end with respect to assimilation strategies. West Germany acknowledged the importance to expellees of recognising their old *Heimat*, while simultaneously encouraging them to resettle in the new one. Initially banned in the West because the authorities feared destabilisation, from 1947 the *Landsmannschaften* (homeland societies) and *Vertriebenenverbände* (expellee associations) quickly developed into organisations which looked after expellees' social, economic and cultural interests but which also became increasingly political.⁷³ In January 1950 Waldemar Kraft, a former SS officer, founded an expellee political party, the BHE (*Block/Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten*) in Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein, demands of which included 'Lebensrecht im Westen', and 'Heimatrecht im Osten', the return of the 1937 borders.⁷⁴ By July of that year the party had achieved 23.4% of the votes in the regional elections thereby gaining fifteen seats in the new state legislature;

⁷¹ Herrmann, Tobias and Karl Heinrich Pohl (eds.), *Flüchtlinge in Schleswig-Holstein nach 1945: Zwischen Ausgrenzung und Integration* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1999), p. 18.

⁷² Schulze, 'The German Refugees', p. 313.

⁷³ For a useful summary see Ahonen, pp. 28-38.

⁷⁴ Burk Henning, Erika Fehse, Marita Krauss et al., *Fremde Heimat: Das Schicksal der Heimatvertriebenen nach 1945* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2013), p. 254.

within three years the BHE had 78 elected representatives in six regional parliaments and eight ministers in four regional governments.⁷⁵ Many early expellee leaders had been high-ranking Nazi officers whose ideology shaped such initiatives as the 1950 *Charta der Heimatvertriebenen*, which I discuss in Chapter Five, and their background and reputation continues to mark expellee activities even today.⁷⁶

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's government, formed in 1949, was keen to demonstrate political stability, and assimilate the enforced newcomers. Although its main priority was building up relationships with the Western community, it did not shy away from demanding border revision on occasions, however Ahonen comments that such statements were merely paying lip service to the expellees due to electoral considerations.⁷⁷ A dedicated Ministry for Expellees was set up, the *Lastenausgleich* Law of 1952 gave partial material compensation for expellees and other disadvantaged groups, and from May 1953 the government granted subsidies, often substantial in nature, to expellee societies for cultural cultivation of the old *Heimat*.⁷⁸ Theodor Oberländer, a former leading Nazi officer and proponent of *Ostforschung* (the study of German influence in Eastern Europe that ultimately led to the notion of *Lebensraum* and the *Generalplan Ost*) was Minister for Expellees, Refugees and the War-Damaged between 1953 and 1960 and installed former Nazis in his ministry.⁷⁹ In December 1958 the two

⁷⁵ Dönhoff, Marion Gräfin von, *Weit ist der Weg nach Osten: Berichte und Betrachtungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten* (Munich: DVA, 1988), p. 115.

⁷⁶ Brumlik, Micha, *Wer Sturm sät: Die Vertreibung der Deutschen* (Berlin, Aufbau-Verlag, 2005), p. 103.

⁷⁷ Ahonen, p. 10.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁷⁹ Hahn Eva and Hans Henning Hahn, *Die Vertreibung im deutschen Erinnern: Legenden, Mythos, Geschichte* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010), p. 522.

umbrella organisations for the *Landmannschaften* and *Vertriebenenverbände* joined into one, the BdV, which is still a thriving institution.⁸⁰ While the key priority in its remit was a return to the old *Heimat*, the subsidiary objective involved ensuring that the old culture was not forgotten.

The Soviet approach to integration in the GDR was, like that of the western allies, based on the use of *Heimat* discourse to assist assimilation, but this was firmly grounded in the rhetoric of a new socialist *Heimat*. Any sense of a past *Heimat* was initially discouraged and later banned. The term *Neubürger* replaced *Umsiedler* from early 1946 in Thuringia and from 1949 references to expellees were officially no longer permitted.⁸¹ The GDR did not bring in an equivalent of the western *Lastenausgleich* Law; however, the authorities did issue earlier financial help to expellees and disadvantaged people than West Germany, in 1946 and 1950 respectively.⁸² ‘Action Weeks’ were organised in various towns in the SBZ, intended to provide practical help for the expellees, but also to make it clear there was no hope of return to the old *Heimat*. The emphasis lay actually less on the provision of aid, and more in a striving for ideological influence; the event headline proclaimed: ‘Neue Heimat, Neues Leben’.⁸³ Many of the publications of the time demonstrate that political persuasion was a key goal of the financial aid.⁸⁴

Irina Schwab notes that the Expellee Action Week held in Leipzig in October

⁸⁰ Ahonen, p. 137.

⁸¹ Wille, ‘Gehasst und Umsorgt’, p. 38. The *Amt für Ostflüchtlinge* set up in mid-1945 had changed its name already by October 1945 to the *Amt für Umsiedler*. Stadtarchiv Jena, F012 Büro des Oberbürgermeisters, Unterbringung und Versorgung von Umsiedlern und Flüchtlingen, Bl. 63.

⁸² Ther, pp. 159 and 163.

⁸³ Donth, Stefan, Christian Kurzweg, Notker Schrammek and Irina Schwab, ‘Aufnahme und Integration von Flüchtlingen und Vertriebenen in Sachsen von 1945 bis 1952 – Vorstellung eines Forschungsprojekts’ in *Geglückte Integration? Spezifika und Vergleichbarkeiten der Vertriebenen – Eingliederung in der SBZ/DDR* ed. by Dierk Hoffmann and Michael Schwartz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), pp. 347-64 (p. 362).

⁸⁴ Donth et al., p. 362.

1948 had the express purpose of making clear that the hopes of return still being discussed amongst expellees were false.⁸⁵

As in West Germany the expellees in the GDR felt isolated and attempted to organise events such as those ongoing in the West. However, meetings of expellees and any attempts at commemoration including the singing and playing of *Heimat* songs were forbidden.⁸⁶ Police files up to the mid-1950s contain many examples of illegal events. Two *Löwenberger* from Silesia denounced their fellow countrymen and reported in great detail on a meeting in Görlitz where seventy people sang *Heimat* songs and complained about going hungry in the GDR.⁸⁷ The *Volkspolizei* in Thuringia reported an illegal meeting of eighteen expellees in the *Martinshof Gastwirtschaft* in Jena on 26 November 1950 to the *Hauptverwaltung Deutsche Volkspolizei* in Berlin, and requested that this inn should be further investigated.⁸⁸ Initially churches did try to offer specific assistance, and developed special church services for expellees; nevertheless before long the authorities clamped down on even this outlet.⁸⁹ Ten years after the expulsion the *Deutsche Post* in West Germany produced a special commemorative stamp portraying a group of expellees, but the GDR postal authorities issued instructions that any post received there with these stamps affixed would be returned unopened, yet another sign of the authorities' increasingly rigid stance on refusing to acknowledge the expulsions.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Schwab, p. 96.

⁸⁶ Wille, 'Compelling', p. 271.

⁸⁷ BArch, DO1/27886, Bl. 22.

⁸⁸ BArch, DO1/27887, Bl. 1.

⁸⁹ Donth et al., p. 364.

⁹⁰ 'Die Stadt Eckernförde wird die Patenschaft für die Stadt Pillau übernehmen', *Eckernförder Zeitung*, 8 August 1955, p. 4.

By the time of the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 integration was declared a success by the authorities in both states.⁹¹ In West Germany assimilation was based on initiatives to assist integration into the second *Heimat*, while at the same time acknowledging the old *Heimat* through cultural activities and commemoration. Although the expellee organisations were still using determined revanchist rhetoric, their membership numbers were falling, the BHE was losing its influence and many expellees seemed content with their second *Heimat*.⁹² GDR strategies were based on assimilation initiatives, a focus on the *new Heimat* and a prohibition of old *Heimat* commemoration. However, an over-proportionate number of expellees left the GDR and resettled in the West before 1961.⁹³ It appears that the new *Heimat* envisaged by the authorities did not successfully replace traumatic memories and a sense of loss, or win over these groups to the GDR philosophy.

Dual or multiple *Heimaten* which seemed possible in West Germany appeared untenable in the GDR and for those expellees who remained in the GDR the pronounced restriction on the commemoration of the old *Heimat* meant that formal memorialisation was impossible and even private memorialisation was difficult due to the activities of informers. Memories of

⁹¹ A thorough discussion of the spectrum of debate on integration is beyond the scope of my thesis. Much research has been undertaken concerning the success or otherwise of expellee integration, some of it considering whether East or West Germany was more successful. Authors note that integration, particularly social integration, was not as successful as claimed at the time by either government. See Ther, pp. 235-6 and 327-47, von Plato and Meineke, *Alte Heimat – neue Zeit*, pp. 248-55, and Kossert. See also detailed local studies in Schleswig-Holstein in Herrmann and Pohl, summarised pp. 18-19.

⁹² From being the second largest party in Schleswig-Holstein in July 1950 with 23.4% of the vote, by mid-1955 the BHE had begun to disintegrate nationwide. Ahonen, pp. 65 and 137. Kossert cites surveys which show that 82% of surveyed expellees in 1949 wanted to return to the old *Heimat*; by 1962 this figure had reduced to 52%, p. 88. The expellees were not, however, necessarily the same people and such surveys are notoriously unscientific. Nevertheless the figures do give an indication of feelings.

⁹³ Ther, p. 340.

the old *Heimat* had to be consigned to the private sphere until the fall of communism. After the *Wende* the type of expellee organisations that had sprung up in West Germany from 1947 quickly developed in East Germany and a wave of memorialisation commenced. Notker Schrammek observes that expellees had very quickly organised themselves into little groups post-*Wende* in many GDR towns even before the setting-up of *Landsmannschaften*, showing that for many people it was a strong psychological need, even after decades had elapsed.⁹⁴ The trajectory and specific character of east German memorialisation and the extent to which it resembled earlier pathways to cultural commemoration in the west will be a key focus of my study in the chapters that follow on memorials and museums.

⁹⁴ Schrammek, Notker, *Alltag und Selbstbild von Flüchtlingen und Vertriebenen in Sachsen 1945-52* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 7.

CHAPTER 1: *HEIMAT*, LOSS AND THE SECOND *HEIMAT*

This chapter sets out to provide the conceptual backdrop for the examination of monuments and museums that follows by first briefly outlining the history of the notion of *Heimat* including discussion of its association with National Socialist ideology. I then consider some aspects of the concept of *Heimat* that have had a core resonance with expellees. These include loss, identity, the representation of *Heimat* by the use of icons including the maternal/feminine body, and *Heimat* as fantasy. Expellees still retain a strength of feeling for the old *Heimat*, supported in many cases by symbolic representation in order to sustain it as a utopian vision.

This thesis demonstrates the absolute durability of the notion of *Heimat*. Individual expellees have retained the old *Heimat* as a core psychological element of identity almost seventy years after the expulsions. Individuals (in West Germany) and societies used *Heimat* rhetoric to negotiate a path through the complex postwar difficulties. Both East and West Germany utilised *Heimat* discourse but its deployment differed significantly. In early postwar West Germany the concept was stressed to bypass the discredited idea of nation in the wake of National Socialism but by the late 1960s the notion had fallen into disrepute, being associated with a reactionary anti-modernism; however, following the rise of the environmental movement, just a decade later *Heimat* was regarded more favourably. East Germany displayed no such swings in sentiment; the authorities consistently emphasised *Heimat* rhetoric to engender an affinity with a new socialist homeland, yet despite these efforts expellees in the former GDR preserved their feelings for the old homeland. *Heimat* thus appears to be a malleable, variable and nevertheless constant

concept. It developed in response to perceived loss of traditions with the onset of modernity: with respect to the expellee scenario *Heimat* signified loss as a territorial dimension in the early postwar years; however the lost East today persists as a national and individual psychological construct.

1. The Concept of *Heimat*

While mostly translated into English as homeland, the term *Heimat* in German has a much wider resonance and the concept is fluid and ambiguous. Its meanings include the locality where one was born and grew up, a place where one feels a sense of belonging and in which a sense of identity is developed in affiliation with the surrounding environment.¹ It can also represent a place for which one yearns. Sociologists and social psychologists regard *Heimat* as a ‘basic human need, comparable to eating or sleeping, “to be known, to be recognized, and to be accepted”’.²

Although the word *Heimat* originates from the fifteenth century, the concept as presently used developed in the early nineteenth century, when the multiplicity of German states was dismantled by the Napoleonic regime and the view of the German locality was being renegotiated.³ In mid to late-nineteenth century literature the *Heimat* theme, ‘an idyll of local communities, close family harmony, and a domesticated friendly nature’, represented a contrast to city life and its seemingly negative associations.⁴ Rapid and increasing industrialisation during the course of the nineteenth century attracted people from their rural homes to the swiftly expanding

¹ See, for example, Boa and Palfreyman, pp. 23-4, Applegate, p. 5.

² Wilhelm Brepohl cited in Applegate, p. 5.

³ Applegate, p. 7.

⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

industrial centres, where they encountered more overcrowding, poverty and crime. After the unification of Germany in 1871 the *Heimat* movement gained momentum as a compensatory endeavour since the local *Heimat* seemed in danger of being threatened by the nation with its perceived problems of political unification and industrial development.⁵ *Heimat* studies became part of school curricula in the 1890s; *Heimatbücher* started portraying the singularity of the individual regions and 371 *Heimat* museums were founded across Germany between 1890 and 1918.⁶ The *Deutscher Bund Heimatschutz* was founded in 1904, and pledged to protect ‘the natural and historically developed uniqueness of the German homeland’, both urban and rural, by coordinating the activities of around twenty-five independent local and regional *Heimatschutz Vereine*.⁷ Additionally, preservation movements such as the *Naturdenkmalpflege* were set up in the hope that cultivation of the local region would help offset any negative effects of modernity and lead to harmony between people and their environment.⁸ In the decades before World War One the *Heimat* movement established activities like rambling and sports clubs, folk festivals, *Heimat* art and literature and local history societies as a reaction against industrialism.⁹ Work of essayists at this time suggests the development of the *Heimat* movement as a ‘romantic and *völkisch* reaction

⁵ Two-thirds of Germans lived in parishes of under 2,000 people in 1871 but by 1910 around half the population lived in towns with more than 5,000 inhabitants and over a fifth lived in towns of more than 100,000. Boa and Palfreyman, p. 1. Berlin’s population, which numbered 172,000 in 1800 grew to 3.7 million by 1910 and that of Essen expanded from 4,000 to 295,000; von Krockow, Christian Graf, *Heimat, Erfahrungen mit einem deutschen Thema* (Munich: DVA, 1992), p. 19.

⁶ Confino, p. 35.

⁷ Rollins, William, ‘Heimat, Modernity, and Nation in the Early Heimatschutz Movement’ in *Heimat, Nation, Fatherland: The German Sense of Belonging* ed. by Jost Hermand and James Steakley (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 87-112 (pp. 95 and 89).

⁸ Fuchs, Anne, *Phantoms of War in Contemporary German Literature, Films and Discourse: The Politics of Memory* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 92.

⁹ Applegate, p. 5.

against modernization'.¹⁰ By contrast, the supposed idyll of the *Heimat* was at times viewed negatively as an enclosed, restrictive space, as exposed in the critical *Heimat* writing of Marieluise Fleißer and Ödön von Horváth in the 1920s and 30s.¹¹

Standing in opposition to modern urbanisation, *Heimat* tends to denote a particular rural environment. Writing on the Pfalz but with wider relevance as an analysis of *Heimat*, Applegate comments that 'the natural attributes of the homeland inspired loyalty and pride; to appreciate nature was to feel the solemn joy of patriotism and to understand the deepest roots of local and national character'.¹² The lost eastern provinces of the expellees epitomise the archetypal homeland of *Heimat* discourse, lands mainly characterised by little industry and beautiful landscapes which remained relatively unscathed by World War Two until the later stages. These regions were mostly spared, for example, the devastating effects of air raids. Expellees demonstrate an immense love for their old way of life, their culture and the beauty of the natural surroundings, whether for the many lakes and forests of Pomerania and East Prussia or the seaside resorts and attractive coastline of the *Ostsee*.¹³

Applegate argues that the idea of *Heimat* gave Germans a way of reconciling both regional and national loyalties: 'Heimat was both the beloved

¹⁰ Palfreyman, Rachel, *Edgar Reitz's Heimat: Histories, Traditions, Fictions* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 21. Examples are given of the journals *Heimat: Blätter für Literatur und Volkstum* (published by Friedrich Lienhard and Adolf Bartels (who was racist, nationalist and anti-Semitic) between 1900 and 1904) and *Der Kunstwart* which furthered *Heimat* ideals.

¹¹ Palfreyman, *Edgar Reitz's Heimat*, p. 23.

¹² Applegate, p. 74.

¹³ Much expellee literature extols the beauty of the landscape of the lost *Heimat* and cultural icons of the past like the romantic poet and novelist Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff and the dramatist Gerhart Hauptmann, both from Silesia. See, for example *Mein Neustettinerland* magazine, produced by the *Heimatkreisausschuß* Neustettin in Eutin, Schleswig-Holstein and educational material like *Europa und die Deutschen: Eine Zeitreise durch deutsche Sprach- und Siedlungsgebiete vom frühen Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, produced by the *Bund der Heimatvertriebenen, Thüringen*.

local places and the beloved nation, it was a comfortably flexible and inclusive homeland, embracing all localities alike'.¹⁴ As Alon Confino notes, the local, regional and national are not separate entities; the *Heimat* idea can represent all three by 'an interlocking network of symbols and representations', the nation and the local thus shape each other.¹⁵ In this way, by deploying *Heimat* thinking, ethnic Germans, particularly those German minorities who lived beyond the German *Reich*, often felt a great pride in their Germanness despite the fact that they lived in another land. It was therefore ironic that Brandenburgers perjoratively designated expellees who resettled in their neighbourhoods 'Polacken', and that those who settled in Bavaria from the Sudetenland were nicknamed 'Zigeuner'.¹⁶

The ability of *Heimat* to negotiate between both local and national affiliations was destroyed by National Socialist ideology: the regime intensified the national aspects of *Heimat* sentiment and rejected local associations.¹⁷ Wickham notes the distinction between a *Gemeinschaft*, signifying community in the *Heimat* sense of mutuality and a *Gesellschaft*, connoting society in the sense of the *Vaterland*, but the slippage between the two terms was an ambivalence which was exploited by the Nazis.¹⁸ The National Socialists embraced the notion of a *Volksgemeinschaft*, incorporating the values of Germanic soil and the customs and practices embodied in *Heimat* principles into their racist and nationalist *Blut und Boden* ideology.¹⁹

¹⁴ Applegate, p. 11.

¹⁵ Confino, pp. 26-27.

¹⁶ Ther, p. 291.

¹⁷ Applegate, p. 18.

¹⁸ Wickham, Christopher J., *Constructing Heimat in Postwar Germany: Longing and Belonging* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), p. 36. This distinction was first posited by Ferdinand Tönnies in 1887.

¹⁹ Applegate, p. 197.

Heimat is not fundamentally racist, nor is it political in essence, being associated with values and social spheres antithetical to the political arena; however, its rhetoric does possess a political meaning which can be appropriated by social and political groups to project a particular viewpoint.²⁰ The *Heimat* meaning thus became ‘politicized, paganized and nationalised’ and ultimately abstract under National Socialism but in the latter stages of the regime it came once more into its own as in the wake of the massive destruction engendered by the war, such a central ‘will’ collapsed and people, and their loyalties, retreated to the localities.²¹

Applegate argues that in post-1945 West Germany, with national identity discredited, *Heimat* discourse was deployed with an emphasis on an unsullied regional or local identity which thus bypassed the tainted nation in an effort to restore some pride.²² Travel literature of the 1950s, which strove to distance Germany from the impact of the Third Reich, particularly stressed the *Heimat*.²³ However, at the same time and because of the association with Nazism, the term *Heimat* was subdued in political discourse of the late 1940s and 1950s except for the specific context of the expellees, a fuller discussion of which follows in the next chapter.²⁴ Use of *Heimat* rhetoric at this point helped both expellees and locals to adjust to postwar life in West Germany. The indigenous population hoped that political pressure would enable expellees to return to their old *Heimat*, and cultural memorialisation enabled the expellees to commemorate their old *Heimat* whilst, as time went by, the majority, particularly the young, formed some attachment to the new *Heimat*

²⁰ Confino, p. 52.

²¹ Applegate, pp. 212 and 226.

²² Ibid., p. 244. I discuss GDR 1945-1989 *Heimat* discourse in the following chapter.

²³ Confino, pp. 90-1.

²⁴ Wickham, p. 7.

as well. Though largely avoided in political discourse, in the cultural sphere the term *Heimat* was ubiquitous in the 1950s, with that decade's film production almost synonymous with the immensely popular *Heimat* films that offered entertainment as well as a comforting approach to some of the key social problems of the time. The *Heimat* films seemed to show that a new, happy life was possible, usually in villages or small towns, although the reality was clearly different from the idyll often portrayed on the screen. Postwar *Heimat* films feature landscapes that were unspoilt by war such as the Lüneburg Heath or the Black Forest and plots commonly revolve around romance, comedic characters, confusion and brief threats to the *Heimat* that are happily resolved. Events focus frequently on traditional regional activities or festivals with accompanying dress, speech and music.²⁵ Expellees do make appearances quite often, either as a sideline, for example in *Wenn die Heide blüht* (Hans Deppe, 1960), where a group of expellees nostalgically sing a song from their old *Heimat*, or as central characters like the expelled Pomeranian landowner Lüder Lüdersen in the popular *Grün ist die Heide* (Hans Deppe, 1951), which contains a long scene of a traditional *Schützenfest* in the presence of many *Tracht*-clad Silesian expellees.²⁶ Three homeless 'happy wanderers' who could be seen as a cipher for expellees imbue the film with sentimental music. The popularity of this genre persisted until the early 1960s, partly due to escapism, and to nostalgia in a period of scarcity and disruption and also as a desire for 'easy reconciliation instead of recognition

²⁵ Kaes, Anton, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 166.

²⁶ von Moltke, Johannes, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 138 and p. 4. Nineteen million Germans viewed the film between 1951 and 1959. Moeller, Robert G., 'War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany', *American Historical Review*, 101 (1996), 1008-48 (p. 1030).

of crimes which could neither be forgiven nor forgotten'.²⁷ In addition, *Heimat* films managed to tackle genuine and serious social problems such as illegitimacy, rape, generational conflict, family breakdown and population displacement in ways which allowed such difficulties to be safely worked through to symbolic resolution.²⁸

Towards the end of the 1960s, however, the theme of *Heimat* became unpopular, especially amongst young people who, in the context of the student protest movement, associated it with nationalism, Nazism and *Blut und Boden* ideology.²⁹ Concurrently anti-*Heimat* rhetoric emerged in the theatre and also in the cinema with the appearance of a wave of anti-*Heimat* literature and films. Such films of the 1960s and early 1970s feature the *Heimat* as repressive and xenophobic and some of the more negative sides of rural living such as 'bigotry, small-mindedness and intolerance' are emphasised.³⁰ Anti-*Heimat* films, often based in Southern Germany or Austria, are clearly influenced by the critical work of Marieluise Fleißer, Ödön von Horváth and Oskar Maria Graf.³¹ By the end of the 1960s *Heimat* thus seemed to have fallen into disrepute; the *Rheinischer Merkur* claimed in 1970 that the concept was 'ideologically biased' and evoked a feeling of 'dullness and confinement',³² and academics such as Uwe-Karsten Ketelsen emphasised its politically anti-modernist and reactionary heritage.³³ By the late 1970s, however, post-1968 left-wing politics, with the rise of the

²⁷ Boa and Palfreyman, p. 11.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 86-102.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

³⁰ Kilborn, Richard, 'Remembering and Retrieving the Past: Edgar Reitz's *Heimat* (1984)', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 31 (1995), 84-98 (p. 85).

³¹ Palfreyman, *Edgar Reitz's Heimat*, p. 37.

³² Wickham, p. 14.

³³ Ketelsen, Uwe-Karsten, *Völkisch-nationale und Nationalsozialistische Literatur in Deutschland, 1890-1945* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1976).

environmental movement and widespread local activism in the form of citizen's initiatives allowed a re-examination of the concept of *Heimat*. In this political context *Heimat* came to stand again for the integrity of the locality and enabled local patriotism to be developed without a focus on the discredited nation.³⁴ Debate from the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s tied the notion of *Heimat* to a reconsideration of German national identity brought about by the increasing temporal distance from the atrocities of the Third Reich in addition to political developments such as Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* that led to more harmonious relations between the two Germanies, and the *Historikerstreit*, a debate that concerned the role of history as a basis for national self-consciousness.³⁵ These are discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

From the mid-1980s *Heimat* even became a fashionable concept again with a shift in perception whereby symbols of traditional *Heimat*, once regarded as kitsch, 'reasserted themselves as trappings and décor', becoming fashionable and marketable.³⁶ Such commodification of the *Heimat* is not unusual; the commercialisation of *Tracht* is another example.³⁷ In pursuit of *Heimat* origins, Heimatler reverted to the old traditional costumes, which had gone out of use in the nineteenth century, in order to cultivate a local consciousness. This special apparel, which Confino considers did not have to be especially historically accurate, and was even occasionally invented, was then commercially promoted for mass consumption.³⁸ Sections on local *Tracht* became a staple in *Heimatbücher* and it featured in local *Heimat*

³⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

³⁵ Boa and Palfreyman, p. 17.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 20. This is exemplified by the dealings of Ernst, a character in Edgar Reitz's film *Heimat*, who dismantles the fittings of old homes to reconstruct them as restaurant and bar furnishings in the 1970s and 1980s.

³⁷ Confino, p. 41.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 49.

museums. It signified above all tradition and wholesomeness; villagers exploited this significance by wearing *Tracht* when selling produce at the market.³⁹ Expellees wear *Tracht* at *Heimattreffen* and during ceremonies held at *Heimat* monuments, which helps to reinforce the distinctive nature of the occasion.

Touristic commodification of the old *Heimat* also took place at Greifswald, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, as it marketed itself after 1990 as a Pomeranian tourist destination, a revived *Heimat* for the expellees forced out of their homelands in that part of Pomerania which became Poland in 1945. After the *Wende*, the town hosted many *Pommerntage*, colourful festivals celebrating the old *Heimat*, the aim of which was to commemorate the old *Heimat* but they also brought together a community diaspora, now based in Germany or overseas. The usual format is a three-day event for up to 20,000 visitors, including political speeches and meetings on East European policies but with a greater focus on culture: *Trachtgruppen*; dancing (often by third-generation family members, sometimes with similar-aged Polish children); singing of old songs; concerts; slide/video shows; *Plattdeutsch* events and sale of memorabilia like old postcards, ceramics and knitware. Although the June 2000 event was held under the motto 'Pommern – Unsere Heimat' speakers like the CDU-politician and Minister-President of Saxony Kurt Biedenkopf spoke of the 'Bereitschaft zur Versöhnung ohne die Vergangenheit zu vergessen' and 'von Verständnis als Grundlage für die gemeinsame europäische Zukunft'.⁴⁰ Despite the politicians urging the renunciation of nationalism on both sides, elements of the crowd still thought

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Gau, Simone, 'Da werden Erinnerungen wach', *Ostsee-Zeitung*, 5 June 2000, p. 3.

otherwise.⁴¹ Revanchist placards proclaiming ‘Noch ist Pommern nicht verloren’, a wording echoing the Polish national hymn, and ‘Das Recht uns holen – Sammelklage gegen Polen’ were in evidence, although the majority of the crowd apparently distanced themselves from such behaviour.⁴²

At times *Heimat* has been viewed negatively as ‘hopelessly antimodern, a reactionary escape from modernity, and a desperate longing for a bucolic past’,⁴³ but Confino notes that recent studies have argued that Heimatler were not antimodern at all, rather they ‘expressed the ambiguity of modernity itself by simultaneously mourning the past while applauding the material progress and cultural opportunities promised by modernity’.⁴⁴ While the specific case of the expellees is different from the early Heimatler, many expellees were, nonetheless, able to concurrently grieve for their old *Heimat*, yearn for return, but also strive to make a new *Heimat* while not losing sight of their *Heimat* roots. In this sense they deploy the *Heimat* concept quite in the manner discussed by Applegate who identifies the potential of *Heimat* to negotiate or smooth over apparently conflicting aspects of experience.⁴⁵

2. *Heimat* and the Expellees

The concept of *Heimat* developed in response to loss, the perceived demise of traditional life with the advent of modernity. Theoretically, *Heimat* always involves lack or absence, as it reflects a past state, invariably viewed nostalgically, and being associated with a yearning back to childhood and its

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Confino, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Applegate, p. 11.

propitious possibilities.⁴⁶ Alongside this psychological loss is the loss of an imagined harmonious wholeness of community in the dislocations of modernity. When local people were interviewed as part of Alexander von Plato and Wolfgang Meineke's research into expellee life in the GDR undertaken just after the *Wende*, they too expressed a sense of a lost *Heimat*, a past that had been destroyed by war and had vanished in the colossal postwar transformation.⁴⁷ The expellees, however, had lost not only their sense of prewar *Heimat* but every trace of their physical, territorial *Heimat*. A huge upset for many was their inability to mourn at cemeteries of their ancestors, where family graves were located and which were mostly destroyed by the new inhabitants.⁴⁸

According to Astrid von Friesen the lack of the territorial *Heimat* and eventual realisation that this was forever, with even visits unlikely, resulted in the strong feelings of loss of the old territorial *Heimat* being magnified and extended from early feelings of anxiety, resignation, and revanchism to nostalgia and eventually fantasies of recovery of the lost wholeness. Expellee strategies for overcoming the loss of their *Heimat* involved living in self-selected ghettos; resignation (which included illnesses like depression and addiction); desires for revenge and fantasies of return; as well as energetic striving to rebuild or re-enact their past achievements.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Fetscher, Iring, 'Heimatliebe – Brauch und Mißbrauch eines Begriffs' in *Heimat im Wort: Die Problematik eines Begriffs im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Rüdiger Görner (Munich: iudicium, 1992), pp. 15-35 (p. 16).

⁴⁷ von Plato and Meineke, pp. 262-63.

⁴⁸ A fairly new phenomenon, usually directed via *Patenschaften*, is the renovating of cemeteries in the old *Heimat*, or the erection of monuments commemorating the German dead, usually annotated in both German and Polish, Russian or Czech. See, for example, the monument in Spore/Sparsee, erected in 1997, from *Mein Neustettiner Land*, December 2009.

⁴⁹ von Friesen, Astrid, 'Der lange Abschied: Psychische Spätfolgen für die Zweite Generation deutscher Vertriebenen' in *Flucht und Vertreibung, Europa zwischen 1939 und 1948*, ed. by Arno Surminski (Hamburg: Ellert und Richter, 2004), pp. 244-49 (p. 247).

The strenuous effort of expellees to succeed in their new lives was also a response to the locals, who in all states developed derogatory names for the newcomers like *Heuschreckenschwärme*, treated their fellow Germans as foreigners, were mistrustful of them as gypsies or because they had unusual dialects. Widespread prejudice suggested that they might be dishonest or criminal.⁵⁰ The sense of *Heimat* for both locals and newcomers was strengthened, but for different reasons. The *Heimat* concept depends on opposites, for instance on identity and difference, and belonging and exclusion.⁵¹ As Blickle notes, the opposite of *Heimat* is *Fremde*; the alien, the foreign and the strange.⁵² The opposition of the Same/Self operates against the *Fremde/Ferne*; a community becomes a community by the exclusion of others.⁵³ The indigenous population perceived a threat to their exclusive locality of being diluted or violated by the foreign ‘other’. In October 1945 a group of people from south Schleswig appealed to Field Marshall Montgomery:

daß, unser Land Südschleswig so bald wie möglich von den Flüchtlingen befreit wird. Dieser Strom von Fremden aus den Ostgebieten droht unseren angestammten nordischen Charakter auszulöschen und bedeutet die seit Jahrhunderten ernsthafteste Gefahr für unser Volk, preußisch zu werden.⁵⁴

Evident here was the harmful force of the too-binding tie of the *Heimat*. While Wickham suggests that the awareness of *Heimat* is actually triggered by the experience of *Fremde*,⁵⁵ Hans-Georg Pott comments that the concept of

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 244.

⁵¹ Boa and Palfreyman, p. 27.

⁵² Blickle, p. 17.

⁵³ Palfreyman, Rachel, ‘Reflections of the “Heimat” Genre: Intertextuality in Edgar Reitz’s *Heimat*’, *German Life and Letters*, 50 (1997), 529-43 (p. 532).

⁵⁴ Burk et al., pp. 32-33.

⁵⁵ Wickham, p. 55.

Heimat is unthinkable without *Fremde* or *Ferne*.⁵⁶ For expellees their sense of *Heimat* was heightened due to homesickness for the *Ferne*, their distant homeland, but the latter can also exist within the *Heimat*, the anxiety about the ‘other within’ being displaced to ‘Ferne’. The *Heimat* operating as a sort of fortress to exclude others, the *Fremde*, also sets up a binary between *Heimweh* and *Fernweh*; people are prevented from leaving, so experience *Fernweh*, the longing for the exotic *Ferne*.⁵⁷

Although Mary Fulbrook makes the point that national identity is crucially ‘a community of common experience, a sense of common fate and destiny’ and asserts that a sense of adversity, being under threat from ‘external, existential threat’ is likely to forge a strong sense of common identity,⁵⁸ this notion is equally applicable to the collective identity of both locals and expellees who often formed groups in commonality *against* one another in the early postwar years. National identity was in this case less important than local belonging. The sense of belonging to a particular sheltered, cultural location was destroyed for the expellees when they fled or were expelled; their security in the *Heimat* was replaced by uncertainty and often degradation in terms of physical habitation, a barrack taking the place of a comfortable home. In some instances expellees formed micro-*Heimaten* in order to foster a sense of community. Case studies in Schleswig-Holstein have shown that although it took many years for expellees to develop a sense of a second *Heimat*, a close community spirit was engendered within the refugee

⁵⁶ Hans-Georg Pott, cited in Wickham, p. 54.

⁵⁷ Boa and Palfreyman, p. 28.

⁵⁸ Fulbrook, Mary, *German National Identity after the Holocaust* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 210 and 215.

camp, Molkestein near Rendsburg and at the clothing factory Liening at Kappeln, which helped the expellees to overcome the ‘enemy’ outside.⁵⁹

Heimat is the ‘Welt des intakten Bewußtseins’ comments Bausinger, ‘nicht nur eine Basis für Identität, sondern gewissermaßen das Wesen der Identität’ thus indicating *Heimat* as the core essence of identity.⁶⁰ The loss of their *Heimat* created a fractured sense of identity for expellees. As Blickle notes, ‘Heimat is more than a trope of identity. It is a way of organizing space and time and a communally defined self in order to shape meaning. Heimat is identity manifested in a social, imaginistic way.’⁶¹ Expellees strove to gain acceptance by integrating into the new *Heimat* but found themselves cast as others as they were seen as ‘infiltrating’ another community. They also still wanted to preserve their own culture and previous identity, looking back from their enforced exile to the lost *Heimat* with a sense of homesickness and longing for the far-away homeland. Both of these aspects were important in the development of a hybrid identity based on a new *Heimat* whilst retaining the roots of the old. This was bolstered by a fixation on icons that represented the old *Heimat*, and which are often present in expellee commemoration.

Symbols for the expellees are an important way of signifying the *Heimat* in that they refresh *Heimat* sentiment by conveying associations to the old place of belonging. Individuals will typically identify with local or *Heimat* culture, what Kurt Stavenhagen names markers of *Heimatlichkeit* such as ‘utensils, food and drinks, family or group customs, music, fairytales, even scientific books and objects which are not used for anything but which are pure symbols, such as badges, rings, and coats of arms’: these can assume

⁵⁹ Herrmann and Pohl.

⁶⁰ Bausinger, p. 9.

⁶¹ Blickle, p. 66.

primary significance when they stand against a foreign or non-*Heimat* culture.⁶² Examples are traditional food or drink like the liqueur *Goldwasser*, produced in Danzig since 1598 and *Königsberger Klopse*, a savoury dish from Königsberg, East Prussia, today Russian Kaliningrad. Kossert writes of expellees for whom the eating and drinking of these regional specialities now has particular meanings: ‘Dann wird nicht einfach konsumiert, sondern Heimat schlückchenweise konsumiert’.⁶³

Other emblems that came to signify the lost *Heimat* in memorialisation include Rübezahl, the mountain spirit of the Giant Mountains (the mountain range between Bohemia and Silesia), who was characterised in many legends as a friendly spirit when he encountered good people but who could be vengeful if crossed, and the female, often maternal body. The latter is long associated with the concept of *Heimat*, where women and particularly mothers construct and convey the security of the hearth. Both Rübezahl and figures of women are used as iconography in expellee memorials that I later discuss in Chapter Three. They are an example of what Jan Assmann calls *Erinnerungsfiguren*: the use of objects, rituals or food and drink to help substantiate memories.⁶⁴ Through these means a group fixes its past and present identity.

The political scientist and writer Christian Graf von Krockow, himself an expellee born in Pomerania believes that an essential part of the security felt in childhood and which is present in the *Heimat* as ‘ein Erfahrungsraum der

⁶² Ibid., p. 39.

⁶³ Kossert, p. 311.

⁶⁴ Assmann, Jan, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 1999), pp. 37-38.

Vertrautheit' is generated by the mother figure.⁶⁵ Rachel Palfreyman notes that *Heimat* literature has many examples of women who can create a harmonious *Heimat* and overcome outside conflicts through use of their imputed qualities of diligence, loyalty, virtue, gentleness and love; she suggests that through feminine analogies the *Heimat* itself can be seen as a sort of womb reflecting warmth and security.⁶⁶ These analogies encompass all women but the idea of the *Heimat* as a womb-like space conveys the notion of fertility, the idea of Mother Earth or Mother Nature.

Edgar Reitz's immensely popular 16-hour film *Heimat* (1984) about the fictional community of Schabbach between 1919 and 1982 is based on local people's memories of the Hunsrück region, as well as incorporating Reitz's own memories of growing up there. The film series has at its heart the loyal, hardworking, family-woman Maria who could be seen as an embodiment of the Hunsrück *Heimat*.⁶⁷ She remains a constant in the locality all her long life while her husband, tempted by the outsider Apollonia, eventually walks out and ventures overseas to seek his fortune. Maria epitomises the *Heimat*; the action mostly takes place around her fixed position and although tempted to leave for the exotic *Ferne* at one stage she never does. We see the *Heimat* changing around her as she ages. In later episodes Maria inherits the responsibility for tending the family graves of the *Heimat* from her mother Katharina and she cares for the remains of her ancestors just

⁶⁵ von Krockow, p. 140.

⁶⁶ Palfreyman, 'Reflections', pp. 531-32.

⁶⁷ The GDR had a similar television series, the *Märkische Chronik*, broadcast in January and February 1983. Based in the fictional village of Güterlohe in Mark Brandenburg it shows life as mirrored in the whole population between 1939 and 1946, constructing 'an ideal-type' of Germans as socialists. Palmowski, p. 127.

as the women of expellee families tend the remains of the lost *Heimat* in the *Heimatstuben* of the twenty-first century.⁶⁸

In an undertaking which outlines *Heimat* from a feminist perspective, Elisabeth Bütfering notes that the fixed gender positioning of *Heimat* as female was clearly in place at the end of the nineteenth century and *Mutter-Blut-Boden* metaphors were perpetuated not just in the Nazi period but for many years afterwards: ‘Heimat ist “mütterliche Lebenslandschaft”, ist “in seinem innersten Kern der Drang zur Mutter”, ist “Lebenschoß”’.⁶⁹ The image of mothers as constant in the *Heimat* was turned on its head in the context of the expulsions. The mothers in the eastern lands were the ones who almost exclusively organised the flights and post-arrival practicalities and it was the women who forged the new *Heimat* while their menfolk returned from the war, often after many years of captivity. In Wicke’s study of expellees in Eckernförde, he acknowledges the part played by women, ‘die Kraft, den Mut, den Glauben und die Aufbauleistungen dieser Mütter und Frauen’. The women made household tools ‘aus den Knicks oder Abfallgruben. Jedes kleinste Stück aus der Heimat wurde wie eine Reliquie gehütet, ich weiß noch, wie Bilder und Andenken gehütet und sorgsam verpackt waren’.⁷⁰

The earth of the old *Heimat* remains a key emblem for expellees; many brought some with them on the flights westward, even though time was scarcely long enough to pack essential belongings. As Samuel Salzborn comments: ‘Die Erde ist eines der elementarischen Heimatsymbole der Vertriebenen. Bei ihrer Umsiedlung nahmen Tausende von ihnen ein

⁶⁸ Gudrun Wölk and Rita Kennel, for example, look after the Neustettin *Heimatmuseum* in Eutin.

⁶⁹ Bütfering, Elisabeth, ‘Frauenheimat Männerwelt: Die Heimatlosigkeit ist weiblich’ in *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Heimat: Analysen, Themen, Perspektiven, Vol 294/I* (Bonn: BpB, 1990), pp. 417-36 (p. 422).

⁷⁰ Wicke, p. 142.

Säckchen Erde mit auf dem Weg, um den ‘Ursprung allen Lebens’ mit sich zu tragen’.⁷¹ Many soldiers in the First World War took earth from home with them as a token, to ensure a safe return or to make more bearable the pain of homesickness or possible death in foreign parts.⁷² Expellees who return nowadays to the old *Heimat* are known to bring back soil with the intention of it being thrown into the grave when they die, in a symbolic ritual blending of old and new *Heimat*. An article in the August 2009 edition of *Mein Neustettiner Land* describes a trip back to the old homeland, Groß Krössin, undertaken by participants ranging in age from twenty-five to eighty-four. The author was one of the youngest, keen to experience the *Heimat* of her mother and grandmother. She quotes an expellee: ‘Es ist eben ein tief berührendes “Wieder-nach-Hause-kommen”, das meist mit der Landschaft, mit der Natur verbunden ist. [...] Für mich sind die Fahrten nach Hause immer Fahrten für die Seele’ and the author concludes ‘Für alle war es eine Reise zu den eigenen Wurzeln – und manch Beutel Heimaterde ging mit zurück’.⁷³

The trauma of flight and expulsion and the often hostile reception by the locals increased the dislocation experienced by expellees and those in West Germany turned to commemoration to acknowledge their *Heimat* roots. Early forms of memorialisation were the *Heimatblätter*, news-sheets of information about the old region and people who lived there.⁷⁴ Fifteen expellee monuments were erected in Bavaria by the end of the 1940s, and a

⁷¹ Salzborn, *Grenzenlose Heimat: Geschichte, Gegenwart und Zukunft der Vertriebenenverbände* (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 2000), p. 131.

⁷² Fendl, Elisabeth, ‘Beerdigung und Totengedenken in der “neuen Heimat”’ in *Das Gedächtnis der Orte Sinnstiftung und Erinnerung. Referate der Tagung des Johannes-Künzig-Instituts für ostdeutsche Volkskunde in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Adalbert Stifter Verein München und der Heimatpflegerin der Sudetendeutschen 21. bis 23. April 2004* ed. by E. Fendl (Freiburg: Johannes-Künzig-Institut für ostdeutsche Volkskunde, 2006), pp. 121-22.

⁷³ *Mein Neustettiner Land*, December 2009, pp. 59-62.

⁷⁴ Nowadays these are often sophisticated magazines; see, for example, the 176-page *Johannisburger Heimatbrief* 2012, produced by Kreis Schleswig-Flensburg.

decade later another 104 monuments had been erected in Bavaria and Schleswig-Holstein. The desire for a representative *Heimat* became apparent, whereby expellees sought to feel an essence of *Heimat* in an uncomfortable new land, by activities such as erecting monuments, often constructed by using symbols from the old *Heimat* and creating *Patenschaften* (like town-twinning, but as it were on an unequal 'godparent/godchild' basis, thus with an element of sponsorship), as if active engagement with the *Heimat* would keep it alive. West German towns started acquiring *Patenschaften* in the old *Heimat* around 1950, a type of adoption of an *Ersatzheimat*, usually one that matched in terms of landscape and other characteristics, like Kreis Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein with Kreis Gerdauen, East Prussia (from 1953) and Kreis Eutin, Schleswig-Holstein with Kreis Neustettin, Pomerania (from 1956). The inauguration of a *Patenschaft* was often linked to the erecting of a monument and publicly celebrated, as in September 1955 when Eckernförde took on the *Patenschaft* for Pillau, East Prussia. Speeches at the ceremony, which was attended by thousands, stressed the responsibility of the locals to help the expelled people of Pillau to find a new *Heimat*: 'Die Bürger unserer Stadt werden immer bemüht bleiben, den Pillauern ein Stück Heimat zu ersetzen'.⁷⁵ The statue, *Der große Kurfürst*, which was brought from Pillau to be melted down for use in armaments in the war, was miraculously saved and erected during the ceremony on Borby waterfront, part of Eckernförde, facing his old *Heimat*, 'bis es an seinen alten Platz in Frieden und Freiheit zurückkehren kann'.⁷⁶ It was seen not just as an art form but 'ein Stück Heimat'. The mayor

⁷⁵ 'Gewaltige Kundgebung zur Patenschaftsübernahme und Denkmalsweihe', *Eckernförder Zeitung*, 12 September 1955.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

of Eckernförde emphasised, in clear revanchist rhetoric, that he was unwilling to accept the border changes and viewed them still as temporary measures:

Hier von Schleswig-Holstein über Mecklenburg und Pommern hin nach der ostpreußischen Bernsteinküste geht das blaue Band, das nicht trennt, sondern für immer verbindet: Unser großes einiges Vaterland, hier vom Belt bis hinauf an die Memel.⁷⁷

The link between revanchism and memorialisation is a recurring theme in my thesis and will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Outings to the former *Heimat* were undertaken as part of *Patenschaft* activities and artefacts were often brought back to recreate a *Heimatstube* in the new *Heimat*. Organised trips still frequently take place and money is often raised too, to support the old *Heimat* in, for example, the rebuilding of ruined churches. A leaflet from the *Heimatmuseum* Neustettin in Eutin claims that many towns in Schleswig-Holstein undertook *Patenschaften* ‘zur Förderung der Integration sowie zur Pflege der Erinnerung an die verlorenen gegangene Heimat’.⁷⁸ In this respect, unlike the GDR’s approach, it was believed that maintaining contact with the old homeland might assist integration into the new homeland. By 1961 Schleswig-Holstein had fifty-five *Patenschaften*, more than any other state, a reflection on the fact that its population almost doubled after 1945.⁷⁹

The use of symbols and setting up of *Patenschaften* was a way to reinforce the memories of a lost *Heimat* and to support a dislocated sense of identity. Both locals and the Allied powers treated the expellees as one homogeneous mass in the early days. They lost their public identity as

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Neustettin Heimatmuseum leaflet.

⁷⁹ Lattimore, Bertram Gresh, Jr., *The Assimilation of German Expellees into the West German Polity and Society since 1945: A Study of Eutin, Schleswig-Holstein* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), p. 101.

Silesians or Pomeranians, as shop-owners, managers or farmers; they were merely ‘expellees’. It was only from 1947 that they could, at least in West Germany, re-assume some sort of regional identity as a member of an expellee organisation while still retaining the overarching label of expellee.

Henning Süssner notes that the numerous *Heimatblätter* of the regional expellee associations provide a ‘seemingly endless narrative of human suffering during and after the expulsion period, and dwell on nostalgic emotional ties to the lost homeland’.⁸⁰ Through interviews he has gained the impression that individual narratives of the past correspond very closely to those in the texts of the *Heimatblätter*. He argues that the memory of the lost *Heimat* framed collective as well as individual identity as expellees struggled to retain their cultural identities in the new *Heimat*. Süssner believes that the quasi-fixation which many expellees maintained about their old homeland and their avoidance of assimilation led to recognition of an ethno-regional identity as an imagined diasporic community within the new *Heimat*.⁸¹ Using Robin Cohen’s characteristics of a ‘genuine’ diaspora he claims that the German expellee community reinvented their community as diasporic. Süssner asserts this could explain the longevity of the expellee networks and the reason why some young people remain interested in their family past – they feel a sense of belonging and an attachment to their roots. While the assertion that expellees avoided assimilation is somewhat exaggerated, the concept of the invented diasporic community is interesting, reminiscent of Benedict Anderson’s description of a nation as an ‘imagined community’. A nation ‘is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know

⁸⁰ Süssner, Henning, ‘Still Yearning for the Lost Heimat?: Ethnic German Expellees and the Politics of Belonging’, *German Politics and Society*, 2 (2004), 1-26 (pp. 6-7).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their community'.⁸² Rudy Koshar, however, disputes this view of a nation, claiming that:

Nations developed their sense of history with reference to specific and tangible objects. They destroyed or built up the past in specific places and landscapes. Not imagination alone, but substantiality and materiality characterized such efforts.⁸³

The two viewpoints are, nevertheless complementary with respect to the expellee experience. Where they could, expellees revived their old community by networks and contacts within the new *Heimat* and invested imaginative efforts to maintain the old *Heimat* as an invented parallel community. They also erected monuments and *Heimatstuben* to represent the old *Heimat*, therefore building up a physical commemorative landscape over the years of resettlement. Thus imagination and materiality interconnect within the frame of the new *Heimat*.

Although *Heimat* has clear territorial implications for expellees, particularly in the early years, it is also evident that it is not just a tangible concept; it is an emotion, a sense, a feeling. 'Heimat ist ein Fantasie- und Wertkonstrukt, mehr Erinnerung, Imagination und Magie als wahrgenommene Gegenwart, mehr Sehnsucht, Hoffnung und Utopie als erfahrene Wirklichkeit und berechenbare Zukunft'.⁸⁴ To a large extent it is constructed, imagined and invented, therefore can exist anywhere. In a globalised world *Heimat* is retained as a sense of roots and carried as a portable component of identity, or is perhaps recalled via certain symbols or

⁸² Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 6.

⁸³ Koshar, Rudy, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory 1870-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 19.

⁸⁴ Gerhard Winter quoted in Salzborn, *Grenzenlose*, p. 133.

food. In a parallel to the nineteenth century reaction against modernity, *Heimat* may even become more necessary as global and local spaces become more important and the national recedes in importance. The process of memorialisation undertaken from 1947 in West Germany and post-*Wende* in east Germany seems to have been undertaken in the main to reinforce that feeling of past belonging, the tangible reaching out for one's roots. Despite studies that claim memorialisation to be a political activity in agitation for the lands back,⁸⁵ an assertion understandable in the early years given the clearly revanchist statements made by expellee advocates, the sheer durability of the commemoration almost seventy years after the events when most expellees would not wish to return, suggests that the activity is centred around *Heimat* as a construct rather than a particular territorial space.

Despite the efforts of the authorities in both West and East Germany to facilitate integration of the expellees into the local population, what does seem evident is the durability of the feeling for the old *Heimat* almost seventy years after the event. In 2006 students from the Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena undertook a study of expellee experiences which included asking individuals about their view of *Heimat*. One interviewee was Maria Eichel, born 1923 in Lemberg and who lived in Posen from 1940 to 1945 before being forced out:

Das Wort 'Heimat' bedeutet etwas Einmaliges. Es ist da, wo ich geboren bin, wo ich aufgewachsen bin. Aber Heimat währt nicht ewig. Wer bleibt schon ein ganzes Leben an einem Ort? Doch das Gefühl 'Heimat' bleibt. Das habe ich gemerkt, als ich wieder in Lemberg war. Mein Zuhause ist hier in Jena, ich sage immer: 'Meine zweite Heimat'. Wenn ich heute von Daheim spreche, sehe ich immer so vor mir, wie es in meiner Kindheit war.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ See, for example, Luppens.

⁸⁶ Satjukow Silke (ed.), *Kinder von Flucht und Vertreibung* (Erfurt: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung/Druckerei Sömmerda GmbH, 2007), p. 82.

How individual memory maintains this notion of *Heimat* as something conjured up out of loss, that in any case no longer exists, and how individuals, groups and societies recall the past is explored in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2: GERMANY'S CULTURAL MEMORY LANDSCAPE

More than sixty-five years after the event, memorials are still being erected and museums being founded that deal with flight and expulsion and the loss of the eastern German territories. Unification in 1990 provided new impetus for memorialisation and East Germans were free after the *Wende* to erect memorials for the first time. In 1995 twenty-two monuments were erected in my four chosen federal states and eleven monuments appeared in both 1994 and 1996. However, this time-period is not the only peak in activity. Monument erection has been ongoing in West Germany since 1947 and 511 monuments have been unveiled in the four federal states over a period of sixty-two years. While the highest number of monuments appeared in the years 1949-52, there have been other peaks over time: notably 1954-56; 1965; 1980; 1985 and 1988, in addition to the aforementioned 1994-96 period. This chapter seeks to explain these fluctuations.¹

Post-unification, *Ostdeutsche* museums were founded in east Germany and supplemented those already in existence in west Germany. The *Schlesisches Museum* in Görlitz opened in temporary quarters in 2001 and moved in 2006 to its current location, and the *Pommersches Landesmuseum* in Greifswald which opened in 2000 as an art gallery was extended from 2005 to function as an *Ostdeutsche* museum. Although the founding of *Heimatstuben* and *Ostdeutsche* museums has not been subject to such peaks and troughs as the erection of monuments, there were fluctuations in levels of *Heimatstuben* establishment (which were founded from the 1950s) with peaks

¹ See the appendices for tables and graphs of the full analysis.

of activity in the early 1980s and early 1990s.² There are still 510 *Heimatsammlungen* in existence in 2009/10.³

Chapters Three and Four detail how monuments and museums commemorate flight and expulsion, as well as the old *Heimat*. In this chapter I seek to answer three key questions. First and crucially, why was memorialisation undertaken at all? Second, why were there waves of memory and peaks of commemorative activity at certain times in West Germany and why was there no such activity in East Germany until 1992? Why indeed does commemoration continue?

In my comparison of east and west German memorialisation I explore how monuments are erected to convey a political and social message about the past in the present: ‘Denkmäler [werden] nicht nur zur Erinnerung an vergangene Zeiten gebaut, sondern auch, weil die Denkmalsetzer Einfluß auf die Gegenwart nehmen wollen’.⁴ East and west German expellees who erect monuments have memories that were influenced over forty years by different social, economic and political circumstances. Memories were mediated through various relationships like the family, friends, or expellee clubs such as those founded from 1947 in West Germany, and influenced by the way that the state and public institutions discussed the past, often in the interests of promoting national identity. Dominant narratives of the national past are continually developed in society, generally by elites through ‘communicative

² Schütze, Manuela, ‘Zur musealen Aneignung verlorener Heimat in ostdeutschen Heimatstuben’ in *Fremdes Zuhause: Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in Schleswig-Holstein nach 1945* ed. by Hermann Heidrich and Ilka E. Hillenstedt (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 2009), pp. 219-34 (p. 221).

³ *Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Maßnahmen zur Förderung der Kulturarbeit gemäß §96 des Bundesvertriebenengesetzes in den Jahren 2009 und 2010*, 19 April 2012, p. 6, <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/DE/Bundesregierung/BeauftragterfuerKulturundMedien/aufarbeitung/deutscheKultur/node.html> [accessed 13 August 2012].

⁴ Jochmann, Herbert, *Öffentliche Kunst als Denkmalkritik: Studien zur Spezifik zeitgenössischer Kunst in Bezugnahme auf öffentliche Erinnerungszeichen* (Weimar: VDG, 2001), p. 20, cited with reference to Mittig and Plagemann’s study of nineteenth century monuments.

processes, struggles for hegemony and debate’ to make sense of the past and project an acceptable image to the outside world.⁵ Expellees in the GDR were told to forget their past. Discussion of the expulsions could not take place within expellee clubs, or in the public sphere, and was confined to the family and intimate communicative networks. Memorialisation and club meetings for expellees were forbidden by the SED, thus suppressing discussion of the expellee past in the public sphere. Once they were free to do so post-*Wende*, expellees in east Germany began to enthusiastically and publicly commemorate their past, which was remembered from a distance of over forty-seven years. Expellees often express a desire for the ‘truth’ about their past to be heard, examples of which follow later in this chapter and in Chapter Three.⁶ Although we might imagine memory is authentic and represents a true version of the past we remember what we believe is important. Memory is selective and continually reshaped over time, as I will demonstrate.

This chapter will first explore theoretical approaches to cultural memory that help to explain the scale and timing of memorialisation. I then discuss the East and West German memory landscapes, charting the extent of commemoration in each phase. I argue that while several theories have been developed in recent years to explain the waves of memory in West Germany including the effect of trauma and generational turnover, ultimately it is the specific socio-political context in which ‘memories’ are produced that shapes the dynamic recreation of the past in the present.

⁵ Heer, Hannes and Ruth Wodak, ‘Introduction: Collective Memory, National Narratives and the Politics of the Past – the Discursive Construction of History’ in *The Discursive Construction of History: Remembering the Wehrmacht’s War of Annihilation* ed. by Hannes Heer, Walter Manoschek, Alexander Pollak and Ruth Wodak (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 1-13 (p. 8).

⁶ See pages 123 and 210 of the thesis.

1. Theories of Cultural Memory

Writing in the 1920s, sociologist Maurice Halbwachs stressed that collective memory is a reconstruction of the past from the perspective of the present. Individuals remember within social frameworks of memory comprised of the family, colleagues, religious community, social class and so on. Both collective and individual memories are interdependent and draw upon collective frameworks to reconstruct a picture of the past that fits the prevalent views, norms and values of society in the era in which the reconstruction is taking place.⁷ During the course of remembering people do not just reproduce their memories but they also embellish them, shorten them or complete them in such a way that they become distorted.⁸ Memory is therefore unreliable: ‘a remembrance is in very large measure a reconstruction of the past achieved with data borrowed from the present, a reconstruction prepared, furthermore, by reconstructions of earlier periods wherein past images had already been altered’.⁹

In the late 1980s Jan and Aleida Assmann built on Halbwachs’s work and developed a theory of memory that identifies two specific modes of collective memory: communicative and cultural memory. Communicative or everyday memory is characterised by informal individual interaction with others and has a limited time frame, usually lasting for between three and five generations, the time in which older family members can pass on their memories to younger ones, namely 80-100 years.¹⁰ Cultural memory is

⁷ Halbwachs, Maurice, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 22-40.

⁸ Ibid., p. 51.

⁹ Halbwachs, Maurice, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), p. 69.

¹⁰ Assmann, Aleida, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2006), p. 25.

characterised by more formal collective reflection on the past mediated through the public sphere, namely cultural forms like texts, rites and monuments and institutionalised communication such as recitation, contemplation and celebration.¹¹ Jan Assmann likens cultural memory to the *Festtag*, in contrast to the *Alltag* of communicative memory.¹² The everyday memory of a specific past event recalled within the private sphere of the family would eventually expire, and is replaced by cultural memory (such as that invested in monuments), a key social function of which is the setting out of a normatively endowed 'official' memory of the past, namely cultural heritage, that has the power to define society. This chapter discusses the changes in this 'official' memory over the postwar decades, and its relationship with everyday memory. Compared to communicative memory, cultural memory is 'eine Sache institutionalisierter Mnemotechnik'.¹³

Memory is experienced on a deeply personal level but it is shaped by interaction within a social context as individual memory and identity are contingent on 'das Wir-Gedächtnis der Familie, der Nachbarschaft, der Generation, der Gesellschaft, der Nation, der Kultur'.¹⁴ These facets are revealed in a spectrum ranging from individual memory to cultural memory and become progressively more stable and influential. Communicative memory, dependent on personal interaction, eventually dies out, passing over to cultural memory that can thus support long-lasting memory through cultural symbols and signs which enable memory to be maintained over

¹¹ Assmann, Jan and Tonio Hölscher (eds.), *Kultur und Gedächtnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), pp. 9-19 (pp. 10-12).

¹² Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 53.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁴ Assmann, *Der lange Schatten*, p. 23.

generations,¹⁵ although the interpretation of such cultural symbols can be changeable over time, as I illustrate in Chapter Three. Nonetheless, constructions such as monuments and museums promote the maintenance of this cultural memory. As Jan Assmann argues, ‘Jede Gruppe, die sich als solche konsolidieren will, ist bestrebt, sich Orte zu schaffen und zu sichern, die nicht nur Schauplätze ihrer Interaktionsformen abgeben, sondern Symbole ihrer Identität und Anhaltspunkte ihrer Erinnerung’.¹⁶

Although communicative memory eventually dies out and passes over into cultural memory, communicative and cultural modes of memory can happily coexist:¹⁷ in the immediate postwar period expellee communicative memories represented German suffering as the version of the past most prevalent in the public memory culture, as I detail later in this chapter. Expellee volunteers work alongside trained curators at the *Ostpreußisches Landesmuseum* in Lüneburg and help shape the visitor experience with their reconstructed versions of the past. The tension between eyewitnesses’ versions of the past and that of professional historians or curators is a key theme in this thesis.

While building on Halbwachs’s theory Jan Assmann takes issue with him when looking at the relationship between memory and history. Halbwachs stresses that ‘general history starts only when tradition ends and the social memory is fading or breaking up’.¹⁸ For Halbwachs history is universal, concerned with ruptures and contradictions, and written by ‘objective and impartial’ historians situated away from the viewpoint of

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁶ Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 39.

¹⁷ Erll, Astrid, *Memory in Culture* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 66.

¹⁸ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, p. 78.

‘genuine and living groups of past or present’, whereas collective memory is particular, related to a group’s similarities and continuities, and appropriates the past with the aim of cultivating a group’s self-image and identity.¹⁹ Jan Assmann takes issue with Halbwachs’s belief that when communicative memory dies out it crystallises into texts, pictures, or monuments thereby losing any characteristics associated with group identity: ‘Memoire geht über in histoire’.²⁰ Both communicative and cultural memories, claims Assmann, are constituted by a social group’s collective identity that is related to the present situation and which he calls ‘identitätskonkret’.²¹ For him, cultural memory is remembered history, transmitted by bearers of tradition such as high priests and shamans or writers, artists and professors. Through the operation of cultural memory history turns into ‘myth’ in which the past can be utilised to serve political purposes, so becoming ‘nicht unwirklich, sondern im Gegenteil erst Wirklichkeit im Sinne einer fortdauernden normativen und formativen Kraft’.²²

Since the 1970s, in a move away from analytical history with a focus on structures, historians have been increasingly concerned with the subjective and cultural processes of history. The relationship between memory and history and the stark polarities posited by Halbwachs between ‘uninvolved history and evaluative memory’ have been challenged.²³ Just like memory, the writing of history is subject to personal interpretations, ideology and culture, and the selection or disregarding of material. Since the 1980s historians have placed increasing value on oral testimony and personal memories in

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 83.

²⁰ Assmann and Hölscher, p. 11.

²¹ Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 38-39.

²² Ibid., pp. 52-54.

²³ Erll, p. 39.

historiography.²⁴ However, the potential unreliability of subjective oral testimony, being prone to reworking and historical revisionism, needs to be balanced by the work of the professional historian who seeks to account for past events in a wider context of cause and effect, rather than constructing an identity.²⁵ To exemplify the problem, Martin Sabrow disagrees with Aleida Assmann's argument that Holocaust survivors contribute to our understanding of the past by virtue of their status as 'moralische Zeugen' who are a 'kostbarer Schatz' even if their memories are proven to be 'faktisch inakkurat'.²⁶ As Sabrow argues, the recognition of eyewitnesses as legitimate rivals to historical interpretations threatens to blur the line between fact and fiction and which can turn history into myth through the pathos of memory.²⁷ Although historical interpretations are not necessarily factual, being shaped by the historian's own analysis and perspective, the latter can be tested by applying standards of historiographical enquiry, by seeking evidence to support or contradict a particular reading. Memory is subjective and does not provide a theoretical basis which can be challenged.

From 1978 the French historian Pierre Nora drew on the idea of collective memory and studied how French national memory has been represented in traditions, following the extinction of living memory. Nora's 'realms of memory' in his seven-volume *Lieux de mémoire* (1984-1992) explore French sites of memory which gave corporeal form to collective

²⁴ Assmann, *Der lange Schatten*, p. 47.

²⁵ See, for example, E. H. Carr's *What is History?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2nd edition, 1987).

²⁶ Assmann, Aleida, 'Die Last der Vergangenheit', in: Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History, Online-Ausgabe, 4 (2007) H. 3, <http://zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Assmann-3-2007>, [accessed 22 September 2011], 7.

²⁷ Sabrow, Martin, 'Die Lust an der Vergangenheit. Kommentar zu Aleida Assmann', in: Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History, Online-Ausgabe, 4 (2007) H. 3, <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Sabrow-3-2007> [accessed 22 September 2011], 2.

memories at a time when the collective memory of the nineteenth century was eroding.²⁸ Such sites in the broadest sense act as mnemotechnics, calling up memory images, and include geographical locations like Paris, memorial days like 14 July and symbols like the French flag. Nora's work was followed by Hagen Schulze and Etienne François's German version, *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte* in 2001, more self-critical with respect to national history, which covers diverse memorial sites like the *Reichstag*, Goethe, the German Football League, Auschwitz, and flight and expulsion.²⁹ Monuments to expelled ethnic Germans are not strictly national monuments, yet they are unquestionably realms of memory. Using Nora's classification they are significant entities which through 'human will' have become 'a symbolic element of the memorial heritage' of a community.³⁰ Nora views memory and history as distinct, analogous to Halbwachs's reading, contrasting the analytical and critical character of historiography with the emotional and magical nature of memory, which 'situates remembrance in a sacred context'.³¹ Chapter Three contains examples of expellee memorial sites that act in this way. Expellees desire 'commemorative vigilance'; they erect monuments and conduct annual ceremonies to mark anniversaries so that history does not sweep their memories away.³²

To summarise, expellees erect monuments by drawing on their own communicative memories that are shaped within a framework of the relevant cultural memory at the time of erection. Museums and *Heimatstuben* are

²⁸ Nora, Pierre, *Lieux de mémoire. Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-1998).

²⁹ François, Etienne and Hagen Schulze (eds.), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte, Eine Auswahl* (*Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bd. 475*) (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2005).

³⁰ Nora, p. xvii.

³¹ Ibid., p. 3.

³² Ibid., p. 7.

similarly affected by the cultural memory of the period in which they are founded. Furthermore, what they communicate to visitors may be influenced by the various communicative memories of expellees who might be involved in their operations. Memories are not fixed, as we have seen, and are subject to change.

2. German Cultural Memory: 1945 to date

2.1 West Germany: 1949-56

West German expellees started erecting monuments from 1947. Between 1949 and 1952 in my four federal states no fewer than fifteen and up to twenty-four monuments were erected per annum. In the years 1953-56 between eight and fourteen monuments were erected annually. Memorials commemorated the fairly recent past and were influenced by the contemporary political and social context.

In this period of sustained and intensive expellee memorialisation expellees perceived themselves as victims and considered they had suffered disproportionately amongst the German population as a whole. They felt they were scapegoats for the crimes of the Third Reich.³³ However, most West Germans also regarded themselves as victims of a war that Hitler had started.³⁴ In the immediate postwar context shaped by the division of East and West, National Socialism was interpreted through the polarised political paradigms of anti-totalitarianism and anti-fascism. West Germany vilified the GDR as a totalitarian state akin to National Socialism and East Germany

³³ Urban, Thomas, *Der Verlust: Die Vertreibung der Deutschen und Polen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2004), p. 9.

³⁴ Niven, Bill, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 3.

identified capitalist West Germany as a state social system that had generated fascism and which continued postwar in the shape of elite groups.³⁵

Historical interpretations in the 1950s generally explained Nazism as part of a broad European trend of totalitarianism and suggested that the population had been seduced by the regime; the blame for National Socialism was limited to Hitler and a core clique of major war criminals.³⁶ Chancellor Adenauer seemed to represent a commonly held view when he spoke in the Cabinet on 26 September 1949: 'Wir haben so verwirrte Zeitverhältnisse hinter uns, dass es sich empfiehlt, generell tabula rasa zu machen'.³⁷ Norbert Frei's analysis of this period shows that in order to achieve stability, memories of the criminal character of German aggression were suppressed and individual memories were not interrogated, resulting in a partial silence on aspects of the National Socialist past. Through Article 131 passed in 1951 for instance, former functionaries and civil servants were amnestied, reinstated or given pensions to help facilitate the stability so desired.³⁸ Jeffrey Herf argues that in order to engender a postwar transformation 'democratic renewal went hand in hand with silence and the forgetting of a dark past. Too much memory would undermine a still fragile popular psyche'.³⁹ Both Frei and Herf argue that Adenauer's policies for the promotion of democracy were based on overcoming Nazism by avoiding direct confrontation with it, and the need to re-integrate the former experts and functionaries.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

³⁶ Fulbrook, *German National Identity*, pp. 113-18.

³⁷ Frei, Norbert, *Vergangenheitspolitik: die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (Munich: DTV, 1999), p. 31.

³⁸ Frei, p. 401-06.

³⁹ Herf, Jeffrey, *Divided Memory: the Nazi Past in the two Germanys* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 6 and 225.

The expellee situation, however, was not subject to silence, or even partial silence. A poll in 1947 showed that 90% of the population regarded the expulsions as unjust.⁴⁰ In the early years of West Germany recognition of expellee suffering was underpinned by broad public and political support, and influenced public and political discourse. All three main political parties attempted to placate the expellees: it was important for the CDU/CSU, the SPD and the FDP to appeal to almost eight million voters.⁴¹ All major parties supported border revision at this time.⁴² Robert G. Moeller believes that expellees' 'private stories profoundly shaped the agenda of postwar public policy and the memories of the war': expellees' suffering symbolised the suffering of the nation brought about by Hitler's war.⁴³

Early encouragement was given by the Adenauer government to memorialise and preserve the culture of the old *Heimat*. Paragraph 96 of the BVFG of 19 May 1953 changed the right of every expellee to maintain his/her own culture to an obligation that the whole German population should uphold.⁴⁴ From now on the government gave considerable financial subsidies to expellee groups to further their cultural heritage; 15.5 million deutschmarks were awarded in 1957-9 alone.⁴⁵ According to Ahonen, expellee rhetoric in the early 1950s castigated the 1919 Treaty of Versailles as catastrophic since German territory had been lost, and emphasised the injustices endured by German minorities since that date. The rhetoric thus both downplayed or

⁴⁰ OMGUS surveys 1945-49. Ahonen, p. 55.

⁴¹ Ahonen, p. 80.

⁴² Moeller, Robert G., 'Sinking Ships, the lost *Heimat* and Broken Taboos: Günter Grass and the Politics of Memory in Contemporary Germany', *Contemporary European History*, 12 (2003), 147-81 (p. 154).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp.154-55.

⁴⁴ Lemberg, Eugen and Friedrich Edding (eds.), *Die Vertriebenen in Westdeutschland: Ihre Eingliederung und Ihr Einfluss auf Gesellschaft und Geistesleben* (Kiel: Ferdinand Hirt, 1959), p. 184.

⁴⁵ Ahonen, p. 100.

condemned Nazi crimes while stressing that expellees had no part in them, and condemned all totalitarian regimes, though primarily the Soviet Union. The continuity of anti-communism melded seamlessly with remnants of National Socialist rhetoric. For example, up to 1956/57 the *Landsmannschaft Schlesien* invoked irredentist nationalist rhetoric of ‘deutsches Volkstum’ to argue for the ceding back of the territories to Germany.⁴⁶

In addition to the erection of monuments in this period, expellees committed their memories to paper, recalled in personal memoirs and as part of a Federal Government-funded project, which started in 1951 and cost 3.5 million deutschmarks.⁴⁷ *Die Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa* incorporated over 700 eyewitness accounts on more than 4,300 printed pages. The team of historians under Theodor Schieder (who lived in Königsberg from 1934, was a Nazi party member from 1937, a leading exponent of *Volksgeschichte*, which refracted social, economic and demographic factors of history through racial categories, and a keen supporter of Nazi expansion in Eastern Europe), attempted to ensure authentication and objectivity in the accounts.⁴⁸ However, they were also aware that this document could be a tool in discussions to win back the territories, as well as useful in the Cold War, as it detailed Red Army crimes. The lengthy introduction described the Red Army’s advance at the war’s end, the decisions taken at Potsdam regarding border changes, and post-1945 Communist governments’ policies on deportation, but not the fact that Germany had initiated the war and carried out genocidal population transfers.

⁴⁶ Lotz, p. 281.

⁴⁷ Salzborn, *Grenzenlose*, p. 64.

⁴⁸ Moeller, Robert G., *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 56-57.

The project did receive criticism: expellees felt it was too soft on Communism whereas East German historians found the undertaking little more than Cold War anti-Communism.⁴⁹ Many commentators also believe the Schieder project made a contribution to relativising German guilt and served to emphasise the Potsdam settlement as a crime and agitate for the lands back.⁵⁰ This official project that lasted ten years served to enhance the public perception of expellee victimhood.

Expellee leaders' rhetoric placed emphasis at this time invariably on expellees as victims comparable with Jews; the expulsions were regarded as the 'greatest collective crime in history'.⁵¹ But comparisons were not just made by expellees. In 1952 Adenauer's Minister of Transportation Hans-Christoph Seebohm (who had personal links to expellees, was born in Upper Silesia and spent a few years in the Sudetenland, but was not actually expelled),⁵² equated the suffering of Jews and expellees when he claimed that 'the methods that were used by the National Socialist leaders against the Jews and that we most vehemently condemn are on a par with the methods that were used against the German expellees'.⁵³ FDP Justice Minister Thomas Dehler had already declared in 1951 that both groups had experienced the same form of persecution, on grounds of ethnicity, and both groups were entitled to compensation because of the loss of life, property and political rights.⁵⁴ Adenauer himself linked compensation for Jewish survivors and

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 56-63.

⁵⁰ Salzborn, *Grenzenlose*, p. 64. See also Levy, Daniel and N. Sznajder, 'Memories of Universal Victimhood: The Case of Ethnic German Expellees', *German Politics and Society*, 23 (2006), 1-27 (p. 10) and Lotz, p. 83.

⁵¹ Ahonen, p. 46.

⁵² Ibid., p. 62.

⁵³ Moeller, *War Stories*, pp. 32-33.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

expellees when he explained that payments to Israel would be limited by the 'bitter necessity of caring for the innumerable war victims and the support of refugees and expellees' in Germany.⁵⁵ Although compensation was paid to Israel and Jewish survivors throughout the Western world (after a 1953 Cabinet debate won by a narrow margin; the decision was unpopular in the Cabinet and the population), little attention was paid to Jewish victims either in scholarly research or through commemoration.⁵⁶

Undeniably in a climate where expellee memorialisation was thriving and both communicative and cultural memory focused on German victims, less attention was being paid to victims of the Nazis. Andrew Beattie indicates that in early postwar West Germany, victims of Communist abuses were commemorated more eagerly than those of Nazi crimes: a 1951 memorial to the 'victims of Stalinism' in West Berlin predates one to the 'victims of National Socialism' by two years.⁵⁷ The lack of readiness to critically engage with the specific German roots of National Socialism and those responsible was driven by an unwillingness to tackle the Holocaust. It was not until the war-crimes trials of the late 1950s and 1960s that historians began to focus on these issues.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Moeller, 'Sinking Ships', p. 158.

⁵⁶ Beattie, Andrew H., 'The Victims of Totalitarianism and the Centrality of Nazi Genocide: Continuity and Change in German Commemorative Politics' in *Germans as Victims* ed. by Niven, pp. 147-63 (pp. 151-52).

⁵⁷ Beattie, p. 152.

⁵⁸ Fulbrook, *German National Identity*, pp. 115-16, Herf, p. 296. Notable were the 1958 Ulm trial where a former police director, amnestied through Article 131 was subsequently found guilty of the murder of four thousand Jews, and the Eichmann and Auschwitz trials.

2.2 West Germany: Mid 1950s to late 1970s

A reduced but steady level of expellee memorialisation took place in this period, notwithstanding peaks of activity at the twentieth and thirtieth anniversaries of the expulsions. Successful integration was trumpeted in official statements as early as the late 1950s in both German states as part of Cold War rhetoric, although the reality was often quite different. Nevertheless, the war generation was now more affluent due to the *Wirtschaftswunder* that had promoted the assimilation process by fostering economic parity between expellees and locals. Popular energies were channelled into developing new ties and identities without in many cases losing sight of the old ones.

One explanation as to why West Germans concentrated overwhelmingly in the early postwar years to the end of the 1960s on their own suffering relates to the effect of trauma. In 1967 the psychoanalysts Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich published 'Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern. Grundlagen kollektiven Verhaltens' in which they claimed that twenty years after the war, Germans had 'de-realised' the past and denied what had happened as a form of defence mechanism. Instead of working through the Nazi past and their narcissistic attachment to Hitler, Germans viewed themselves as victims, fended off feelings of guilt and shame in order to avoid depression, and concentrated on the rebuilding and modernising of the new state that gave them renewed self-esteem. Mourning can, according to the Mitscherlichs, only take place when someone is capable of empathy and Germans had not

reached that stage with respect to the victims of Nazism.⁵⁹ This theory implies that a whole society functions solely as one entity and it seems implausible that an entire society should suffer trauma and potentially deny what had happened. Trauma is not a collective socio-political phenomenon but usually concerns individual psychological processes. Moreover, the silence on Nazi perpetration was only a partial silence; public discussion had intensified in the context of the war-crimes trials before the Mitscherlichs' text appeared in 1967. By the end of the 1960s, as I demonstrate, the memory landscape was changing.

West German foreign policy, dominated in the early years by non-recognition of the postwar borders and inflexibility towards Eastern Europe, gradually eased through political change and rapprochement; Adenauer's priority was *Westbindung*. The Hallstein doctrine of 1955, whereby West Germany would tolerate only the USSR having diplomatic ties with the GDR,⁶⁰ was gradually relaxed in *Ostpolitik* from the mid-1960s. The 1968 student movement made a sharp distinction between its guilt-free generation and that of its parents within a climate in which the crimes of the past could, and should be interrogated, particularly within the context of the continuity of elites amnestied by the Adenauer government. The coming of age of this new generation coincided with political change after the election of the social-liberal coalition in 1969 led by Willy Brandt as chancellor, and a new direction in foreign policy in the form of *Ostpolitik*, one that was unwelcome for many expellees. The *Kieler Morgenzeitung* on 22 August 1966 contained

⁵⁹ Mitscherlich, Alexander and Margarete, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern: Grundlagen kollektiven Verhaltens* (Munich: Piper, 1967 (21st edition, 2009)), pp. 34-35.

⁶⁰ Ahonen, p. 122.

a headline: ‘Wir verzichten nicht! 10 000 Teilnehmer bei Kundgebung der Pommern in der Ostseehalle [...]. Verwirrende Deutschlandpolitik’.⁶¹

Although the headline suggests substantial concerns about *Ostpolitik*, and the possibility that it might lead to ratification of the new borders, over the course of the 1960s indications point to a disjunction between what expellee leaders were articulating and the feelings of the majority of expellees. Even in the previous decade there were signs of disenchantment. Votes for the BHE had steadily declined and the party failed to reach the necessary 5% in the *Bundestag* election of 1957;⁶² the majority of expellee votes went to the CDU/CSU.⁶³ Although a 1961 poll had shown that more than 50% of expellees still desired to return to their homeland,⁶⁴ almost half did not. Ahonen considers that by the end of the decade the majority of expellees, who were becoming increasingly integrated into West German society, were opposed to the ‘firebrand rhetoric’ of the expellee leaders.⁶⁵ Expellees regarded the political activities of their clubs and networks as secondary to social and cultural objectives, and membership numbers of such associations were declining.⁶⁶ Just 1% of expellees belonged to a *Landsmannschaft* in 1965.⁶⁷ The social-liberal coalition cut back on funding to expellee organisations in 1969 and in spring 1970 the expellee ministry was abolished.⁶⁸ The *Frankfurter Rundschau* headlined on 17 March 1971: ‘Nur wenige Vertriebene wollen in die Heimat zurück. Ergebnis einer

⁶¹ StA Kiel. 70916, Amt für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte, Zeitungsausschnitte, 1962-1970.

⁶² Beer, p. 124.

⁶³ Connor, p. 235.

⁶⁴ Beer, Mathias, *Flucht und Vertreibung der Deutschen: Voraussetzungen, Verlauf, Folgen* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2011), p. 110.

⁶⁵ Ahonen, p. 225.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Connor, p. 162.

⁶⁸ Ahonen, p. 243.

Meinungsumfrage/ Mehrheit der Bevölkerung beurteilt Bonner Ostpolitik positiv'. Only 18% refugees and expellees would now go back, according to the article.⁶⁹

In the late 1960s the SPD called for recognition of the postwar borders.⁷⁰ A 1967 poll of West Germans showed 60% who thought the former territories were now irretrievably lost, increasing to 70% by 1969.⁷¹ In 1972 the Moscow and Warsaw treaties were signed in clear recognition of the new borders, and a basic treaty was ratified with the GDR in 1972 (despite an appeal by the CSU to the Constitution Court on the grounds that this treaty was unconstitutional), and with Prague in 1973; however, expellee organisations still refused to accept reality and some activists vowed to continue the fight, despite the 'resignation' of more moderate rank-and-file members.⁷²

From the late 1960s there were signs of gradual wider political acknowledgement about the Nazi past. Willy Brandt's sinking to his knees in an act of symbolic atonement at the Warsaw Ghetto memorial in 1970 was the first time a West German chancellor had so publicly acknowledged the crimes,⁷³ possibly easier for someone who had resisted the Nazi regime. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's speech at Auschwitz, 1977, and his 1978 speech on the 40th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, iterated the importance of recognising the ongoing collective responsibility of Germans for the past,

⁶⁹ StA Kiel. 70677, Amt für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte, Zeitungsausschnitte, 1966-1981.

⁷⁰ Moeller, 'Sinking Ships', p. 160.

⁷¹ Ahonen, p. 224.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 252-53.

⁷³ Herf, p. 345.

even though individuals of the present were mostly free from blame.⁷⁴ The American drama series *Holocaust* televised in Germany in 1979, had a widespread impact on Germans by showing the personal effect of National Socialism on both victims and perpetrators. Interest in the Holocaust, both public and scholarly, had developed only from the 1960s and became particularly strong only from the late 1970s.⁷⁵ Compensation for those persecuted on political, racial and religious grounds was initially selective and restrictive. Only from the late 1970s did groups like the Sinti and Roma, homosexuals, communists and disabled receive some public recognition as sufferers from Nazi persecution although even then these groups struggled against the tendency to see the Jewish people as definitive victims.⁷⁶ Indeed, it was not until the 1980s and particularly from the mid-1990s in the debate about the Holocaust memorial that wider public attention was given to these groups of victims.⁷⁷ The turbulent social and political climate of the 1970s including economic recession, the 1973 oil crisis and the RAF terrorism fuelled discussion about German identity and this phase of intense historical reflection set the stage for the memory debates of the 1980s.⁷⁸

Many expellees' communicative memories were now out of step with the public memory culture, engendered by the political shift in the climate of West Germany. Fewer expellee monuments were erected in this period in general, influenced by the official memory discourse that centred on Germans

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 346-47.

⁷⁵ Beattie, p. 152.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 154.

⁷⁷ Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, p. 222.

⁷⁸ Kansteiner, Wulf, 'Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle: The Legacy of Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany' in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* ed. by Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner and Claudio Fogu (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 102-46 (p. 121).

as perpetrators. Public discussion of German victims was mostly avoided. Between the years 1967 to 1978 around three monuments were erected per annum.

2.3 West Germany: The 1980s

The 1980s were characterised by increased activity in the founding of *Heimatstuben* and in the erection of monuments. In 1980 eight monuments appeared and in each of the following three years seven were erected. 1985 saw thirteen erected and 1988 ten. Monuments had frequently been erected on anniversaries of the expulsions and the fortieth anniversary since the end of the war and the expulsions was a landmark.

The political discourse on German identity in the mid-1980s was polarised between social democrats, who believed that modern West German democracy relied on the breakdown of German national traditions in 1945 and who applauded the failure of the *Sonderweg* (the theory of Germany's path to modernity being steered by authoritarian, anti-democratic elites and which had led to National Socialism), and those oriented to the political right, who desired the reinstatement of 'traditional' values.⁷⁹ The 1980s were marked by greater debate about the past, exemplified by events around the key anniversary. On 5 May 1985 Chancellor Helmut Kohl and US President Ronald Reagan controversially visited the soldiers' graveyard at Bitburg to commemorate the end of World War Two. Forty-seven of the 2,000 German graves belonged to members of the Waffen-SS, thus the state leaders' act was interpreted as giving equivalence to perpetrators and victims, especially as

⁷⁹ Wilds, Karl, 'Identity Creation and the Culture of Contrition - Recasting "Normality" in the Berliner Republik', *German Politics* 9 (2000), 83-102 (p. 87).

Reagan's later press release indicated that the German soldiers were also victims of Nazism, just like concentration camp victims.⁸⁰ Three days later Federal President von Weizsäcker gave a speech in the *Bundestag* on 8 May where he spoke about the need for conciliation but made it clear that the past could not be forgotten, Germans had a 'moral debt of memory towards the Jews'; he gave Jews, Poles and Russians precedence as victims over Germans.⁸¹

Concurrent with the growing awareness of German crimes during World War Two was the debate known as the *Historikerstreit*. This took place in 1986/7 and ostensibly concerned the singularity of the Holocaust within a framework of discussions regarding national identity. Intellectuals broadly aligned to the political left and right, most notably Jürgen Habermas and Ernst Nolte respectively, debated whether comparisons between Stalinist terror and the Holocaust were motivated by a desire to resurrect a conservative nationalism. Nolte's text that linked Bolshevik terror, the Gulag Archipelago and Auschwitz was regarded as revisionist rhetoric by Habermas who detected behind it a nationalistic agenda that Germany should once more be seen as a 'normal' nation.⁸² Habermas also criticised the historian Andreas Hillgruber's account 'Zweierlei Untergang: Die Zerschlagung des Deutschen Reiches und das Ende des europäischen Judentums', a defence of the expellees and those who fled which juxtaposed the Holocaust and the expulsions, thereby appearing to show some comparability, in that both originated from political extremism.⁸³ Indeed Hillgruber provided a more

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 87 and 99.

⁸¹ Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, p. 148.

⁸² Palfreyman, *Edgar Reitz's Heimat*, p. 73.

⁸³ Moeller, *War Stories*, p. 189.

detailed and vivid account of the collapse of the German front in East Prussia and the expulsions than of Jewish suffering, as if to emphasise where readers' empathies should lie, prompting the historian Charles Maier to remark: 'If indeed these two experiences are two sorts of destruction, one is presented, so to speak, in technicolor, the other in black, gray, and white'.⁸⁴ Stefan Berger comments that Hillgruber's text which focused on Germans as victims comparable to Jewish victims would have been received pragmatically in the memory climate of the 1950s, yet in the mid-1980s it seemed unacceptable as it 'flew in the face of the dominant perpetrators' discourse'.⁸⁵ Although Berger is correct in his claim regarding Hillgruber's text, his reasoning is inaccurate. Public discourse was politically polarised and the *Historikerstreit* indicated that the perpetrator-centred perspective remained controversial and far from consensual.

Despite the concern in some quarters about commemorating German victims, extensive expellee memorialisation resumed, assisted by substantial sums awarded by the CDU/CSU Kohl government from 1982.⁸⁶ *Patenschaft* activities persisted unabated, exemplified by the Rendsburg/Gerdauen relationship. Since this *Patenschaft* commenced on 18 October 1953 activities included the erecting of Gerdauen stone monuments, the establishment of a *Heimatstube*, the naming of a street Gerdauenstraße, production of a *Heimatsbuch Der Kreis Gerdauen* in 1968 and 1983, thirteen *Heimatsbriefe* from August 1988 to July 1994 and *Hilfstransporten* to assist the former

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Berger, Stefan, 'On Taboos, Traumas and Other Myths: Why the Debate about German Victims of the Second World War is not a Historians' Controversy' in *Germans as Victims* ed. by Niven, pp. 210-24 (p. 222).

⁸⁶ Bergsdorf, Wolfgang, 'Der Stellenwert und ostdeutscher Kulturpflege in der Ära Kohl' in Jörg-Dieter Gauger and Manfred Kittel (eds.), *Die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten in der Erinnerungskultur* (Sankt-Augustin, Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, 2004), pp. 53-67 (p. 64).

Heimat.⁸⁷ Trips to the old *Heimat*, the so-called *Heimwehtourismus* or *Erinnerungstourismus* started in earnest from the late 1950s, although always subject to the political climate in the Eastern Bloc, and still continue.

The public face of the expellees was frequently still characterised by outspoken revanchist right-wing elements who seemed at odds with the rest of the population. At an expellee rally in Hanover in 1985, contrary to promises made to Chancellor Kohl of toned-down rhetoric in order to persuade him to attend, expellees raised banners at his entrance pronouncing ‘Schlesien bleibt unser’. This was however a minority opinion; a poll that same year showed 76% of all West Germans were ready to live with current borders.⁸⁸

In summary, the 1945-89 West German memory landscape was typified by oscillating waves of discourse. Up to the late 1960s more attention was given to German victims than the victims of the Germans under National Socialism. Thereafter, until the mid-1980s, the role of Germans as perpetrators came to the forefront, with a gradually more nuanced discourse developing from the mid-1980s, characterised by consideration of both victims and perpetrators. As I have shown, the extent of expellee memorialisation mirrored the oscillation of the memory discourse in West Germany. I consider the situation in unified Germany after discussing East German developments in the following two sections.

⁸⁷ Letter from Herr Gettkant, expellee leader, to the town mayor, dated 11 August 1994. StA Rendsburg, *Patenschaft Gerdauen*. Bd 5. The file contains also details of various exhibitions over the years.

⁸⁸ Moeller, ‘War Stories’, p. 1041.

2.4 East Germany: 1945 to mid-1971

Before the *Wende* expellees in the GDR were forbidden to publicly discuss their old *Heimat* and monuments were erected only from 1992. Mention of the expulsion of Germans from fellow Communist countries was unwelcome in East Germany.⁸⁹ In contrast to West Germany, which experienced changing memory waves, the position of the expulsions remained fairly constant in the GDR between 1945-89, partly because of party control of historiography and a public discourse that did not allow for the free expression of memory.⁹⁰ I shall consider the memorial landscape therefore in two phases, broadly the regimes of Walter Ulbricht, and Erich Honecker (from 3 May 1971). My aim here is to examine the conditions under which memorialisation of the old *Heimat* was *not* allowed to develop. I argue that the prohibition of public commemoration of the expulsions in the GDR left traces which would later be revealed when expellees and their children began to commemorate the events after the unification of the two German states.

As in West Germany, the early postwar years in the GDR were concerned with the rebuilding of a devastated land and the forging of a new state identity. Keen from the republic's inception to distinguish itself from West Germany the SED constructed a friend/foe mentality whereby its neighbour was a 'capitalist-imperialist class enemy'.⁹¹ In the SED's view, fascism had resulted from capitalism and imperialism and was resisted by valiant communists on behalf of the 'oppressed and innocent people' under

⁸⁹ Berger, 'On Taboos', p. 215.

⁹⁰ In the post-Stalinist era of the late 1960s and early 1970s historians were able to undertake studies previously not permitted but the SED still controlled the parameters and historians had a limited voice. Berger, Stefan, *The Search for Normality: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800* (Oxford: Berghahn, 1997), p. 93.

⁹¹ Fulbrook, *German National Identity*, p. 215.

Nazism.⁹² Anti-fascism in the East with respect to the Nazi past served to help legitimise the GDR and emphasise its difference from the capitalist West.⁹³ It was also employed to legitimise the process of Sovietization, which was undertaken in the transformation of society. Germans were told they were ‘liberated’, not ‘occupied’ by the Russians, and they were also subject to repression; brutal rapes of German women in the last months of the war, in the early postwar period, and even up to 1949, predominantly by the Red Army, for instance, were disregarded.⁹⁴

Although West Germany and the GDR had substantial ideological differences, in the late 1940s and 1950s the doctrine being propagated about the Nazi past was similar in certain respects; it tended to exonerate the majority of the population from any responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi regime. As in West Germany, GDR citizens were given the feeling that they had been innocent victims of the Second World War; furthermore, at the time of the Cold War public rhetoric stressed how Allied bombing raids had resulted in German victims. The Dresden experience was especially singled out, and equated at times with Jewish suffering in the Holocaust.⁹⁵ However, by and large in the GDR of the 1950s there was no discussion of the Holocaust.⁹⁶ Indeed, until its end the GDR had no diplomatic relations with Israel, paid no compensation to Jews (until the late 1980s) and kept the Holocaust peripheral in its national political culture due to its anti-Zionist, anti-capitalist stance. The democratic government’s first act in 1990 accepted

⁹² Ibid., p. 118.

⁹³ Beattie, p. 151.

⁹⁴ Naimark, Norman, M., *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 2 and 89.

⁹⁵ Berger, ‘On Taboos’, p. 215.

⁹⁶ Fulbrook, *German National Identity*, p. 110.

joint responsibility for Nazi crimes and ended forty years of marginalised discussion regarding the Holocaust.⁹⁷

GDR policy towards expellees was one of attempted indoctrination; blaming the forced migration on the Nazis, destroying any hope of return, reducing anti-Soviet and anti-Communist sentiment and convincing them to play an active role in rebuilding and transforming their new *Heimat*.⁹⁸ The magazine *Die neue Heimat* was first produced in May 1947 by the *Zentralverwaltung für deutsche Umsiedler* with the specific aim: ‘eine neue Heimat aufbauen helfen, ein friedliches, demokratisches und somit glückliches Deutschland’.⁹⁹ The foreword stressed: ‘Wir sind ein Volk, eine Nation, und der Boden, auf dem wir gemeinsam leben, ist unsere Heimat’.¹⁰⁰ The first edition contained a number of positive stories about happily-resettled expellees and references to new expellee businesses, including the *Neptunwerft* in Rostock, which employed almost 40% of expellees in its workforce. The magazine’s clear message was that there is no return, there is just one, new *Heimat*.¹⁰¹

Expellees sought to maintain their cultural traditions in the new environment but their efforts were suppressed.¹⁰² Expellee gatherings were prohibited and even the singing of songs from the old *Heimat* was not allowed.¹⁰³ The only avenue seemingly available to expellees other than the

⁹⁷ Herf, p. 363.

⁹⁸ Wille, ‘Compelling the Assimilation’, p. 271.

⁹⁹ BArch, ZB 4791a, 1947, 1.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Schrammek’s research via 100 expellee questionnaires in Saxony found some isolated cases of dance-evenings in *Kreis Rochlitz*, but only up to the end of 1945; thereafter even meetings of expellees in pubs with no particular purpose were banned. Schrammek, *Alltag*, p. 286.

¹⁰³ Wille, ‘Compelling the Assimilation’, p. 271.

private sphere was to meet within church circles and exchange experiences.¹⁰⁴ Otherwise family get-togethers or informal gatherings of trusted friends such as card clubs became the only means available to retain an expellee identity.¹⁰⁵ Schrammek's research into expellees in Saxony found an element of bitterness about their fate and the impossibility of public recognition of their expellee status.¹⁰⁶

By March 1949 the authorities had realised that expellees would attempt to initiate *Landsmannschaften* as in West Germany and gave orders to ban such gatherings.¹⁰⁷ Files in the *Bundesarchiv* show how the attempts to create clubs in the West German manner, which were viewed as having an ideological association with fascism and nationalism, were stifled. By mid-1949 it was compulsory to inform the police three days before any planned event; all clubs were scrutinised to check their purpose.¹⁰⁸ A skat and billiards club in Görlitz, for example, was banned as it resembled an expellee organisation.¹⁰⁹ The authorities were aware of revisionist agitation observable in West German expellee organisations, which were seen as neo-fascist, and the SED sought to assimilate expellees in the GDR as swiftly as possible to avoid any similar problems.¹¹⁰ Despite the prohibition on meetings, police files in the early years report numerous illegal events, often large in number. On 20 May 1951 a sizeable meeting took place at Halle Zoo; expellees were apparently recognisable due to their clothing.¹¹¹ Five hundred expellees

¹⁰⁴ Schrammek, *Alltag*, p. 292.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, Erwin Tesch.

¹⁰⁶ Schrammek, *Alltag*, pp. 291-93.

¹⁰⁷ 200 participants were discovered at a *Heimattreuer Verein* in Berlin-Schöneberg on 6 March 1949 who intended setting up 75-80 more *Landsmannschaften*, BArch, DO1/25071, Bl. 12.

¹⁰⁸ BArch, DO1/25071, Bl. 16.

¹⁰⁹ BArch, DO1/27887, Bl. 57.

¹¹⁰ ThHStA, Land Thüringen. Ministerium des Innern. Akte 3822, Bl. 49.

¹¹¹ BArch, DO1/27887, Bl. 38.

attended a meeting at Leipzig Zoo on 6 August 1950 for the *Tag der Heimat*.¹¹² Even exchanging letters was viewed as an illegal activity and fellow expellees often betrayed others by reporting them to the police. Other examples in the police files show clearly the attempts by expellees to memorialise their *Heimat*. A letter from a man signing himself ‘Mit heimatlichen Grüßen’, offered coats of arms from Grünberg, Silesia for sale. An *Oppelner Heimatbrief* headed: ‘Heimat wir glauben an dich! Heimat, wir hoffen auf dich! Heimat, wir lieben dich!’ was found and confiscated in the GDR.¹¹³ The Brandenburg police force reported the distribution of a *Heimat* calendar for Silesia by a publisher in Leipzig, ordered from a source in Munich.¹¹⁴ In addition, expellees were aware of the *Heimat* commemoration in West Germany; before the erection of the Berlin Wall people attended meetings there and some written material was brought back without permission. From the late 1960s all of the GDR except the far south-east could receive (albeit illegally) Western TV.¹¹⁵ However, the prohibition on East German expellee organisations became increasingly rigid even though expellees did attempt to organise meetings up to 1956/57.¹¹⁶

Although the SED prohibited unregulated discussion of the expulsions and the old *Heimat*, the claim of a taboo about the expulsions did not appear to relate to film. Bill Niven argues that a critical empathy towards refugees was shown in a number of films and televisual productions, particularly stressing the part they played in constructing the new socialist *Heimat*, which

¹¹² BArch, DO1/27886, Bl. 87.

¹¹³ Ibid., Bl. 180. Issue dated October 1950.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 163.

¹¹⁵ Fulbrook, Mary, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 75.

¹¹⁶ Burk et al., p. 196.

showed their commitment to the new homeland; refugees appeared both ‘vulnerable and pioneering’.¹¹⁷ However, Niven stresses that the emphasis lay on integration; the expulsion itself did not generally feature.¹¹⁸ The SED sought to extend its control over discussion of the expulsions in both the private and public sphere. Reports on the weekly newsreel *Der Augenzeuge* portrayed smiling residents waiting at the station to welcome the expellees, and quarantine camps depicted children playing happily, appearing more like a holiday camp than the consequences of expulsion.¹¹⁹

The *Zentral Verwaltung für deutsche Umsiedler* set up in 1945 in the Soviet zone to help expellees was abolished in July 1948 and the status of *Umsiedler* was removed.¹²⁰ The Warsaw Declaration of 6 June 1950 and the Görlitz treaty of 6 July 1950 formally ratified the Oder-Neiße border in the GDR, although West Germany delayed this formality until 1991.¹²¹ The authorities declared assimilation a success, yet in contrast to the West, East German expellees were denied the compensatory acknowledgement of the cultural tradition of their former *Heimat*.

By 1961, the time of the erection of the Berlin Wall, the GDR had been transformed by a succession of economic reforms, radical alteration of the socio-economic structure, collectivisation of agriculture and the eradication of most private ownership in finance and industry.¹²² Simultaneously, once the SED’s ideological suspicion of the *Heimat* idea was abandoned when they realised that Germans’ longstanding attachment to the

¹¹⁷ Niven, ‘On a Supposed Taboo’, p. 219.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 234.

¹¹⁹ Donth et al., p. 362.

¹²⁰ Ther, pp. 232-33.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 345.

¹²² Fulbrook, *The People’s State*, p. 6.

notion could not be readily discarded, *Heimat* discourse was employed to assist the creation of a new identity for the republic.¹²³ The new bureaucratic elite was keen to replace the ‘traditional, bourgeois and Nazi mentalities’ of the *Heimat* idea with *Heimat* symbolism that suited their own ideology. *Heimat* is a concept that can fit a range of ideologies but within the limits of a local metaphor that can represent the nation.¹²⁴ Between 1949 and 1961 *Heimat* was reshaped into a symbol that cohered ‘in terms of class, not geography and birthplace [...] [but on] ownership of the means of production’.¹²⁵ The SED used ubiquitous *Heimat* images and iconography on election posters which suitably described the ‘sort of spacelessness of the nation in flux between 1945 and 1949’.¹²⁶ In the GDR of the 1950s *Heimat* images were de-Christianized, for example, the common symbol of church towers was replaced with factory chimneys.¹²⁷ Confino argues that ‘Heimat was meaningfully used in this period not so much as a vehicle for manipulation but as a national imagination’.¹²⁸ This was, however, not the case when referring to the expellees. In their situation the ban on expellee meetings and focus on enforced integration was indeed an attempt at manipulation. Expellees were expected to forgo their roots, the essence of the idea of *Heimat*, as part of the enforced construction of a socialist *Heimat*. Jan Palmowski’s study, undertaken to discover why the GDR had so suddenly yet peacefully collapsed in 1989 argues that the concept of *Heimat* was a key factor. *Heimat* rhetoric was not initially closely entwined with socialism, and

¹²³ Confino, pp. 95-96.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 92-93.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 102.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 99.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 104.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 99.

indeed *Heimat* terminology was particularly problematic in the early postwar years due to its association with fascism. However, by the late 1950s the notion of *Heimat* occupied a central place in the construction of East German nationhood.¹²⁹ A decade later through use of television, illustrated journals and newspapers the SED had strengthened the GDR concept of *Heimat* and managed to construct its own sites of memories that in the early years were missing, or stemmed from the once united Germany.¹³⁰ Confino claims that identity was imparted through travel, nature, history and sport and links this to *Heimat* rhetoric,¹³¹ but numerous grass-root initiatives were fostered without necessarily having a *Heimat* oriented purpose. Fulbrook remarks on the importance of mass organisations in shaping East Germans' lives; not just through 'malevolent control' by the state, but involving activities that people enjoyed, like sport, cookery, fishing or singing.¹³² She points also to the 'battles for the soul' of the youth in GDR society; the *Jugendweihe*, for example, introduced in 1954 was at first regarded as a confrontation with the church but became accepted as a normal part of life by the 1960s, an aspect of young people's socialisation.¹³³ The young people who grew up in East Germany regarded socialism as the norm, therefore the official exclusion of the old *Heimat* also seemed normal to them. The endless rhetoric of loving the new socialist *Heimat* and hating West German imperialism did indeed have an effect on young people. Children of East German expellees do not, in the main, feel such a close affinity to the old territories as those in the West, a

¹²⁹ Palmowski, p. 26.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 89.

¹³¹ Confino, p. 109.

¹³² Fulbrook, *The People's State*, p. 87.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 123.

clear legacy of the GDR, traces of which are observable in post-unification memorialisation.¹³⁴

Regional identities were not just altered by ideology. The influx of 4.3 million expellees, namely one in four of the population, had already reshaped localities and in 1952 the old *Länder* were replaced by fifteen new *Bezirke*, within which were smaller *Kreise* and *Gemeinden*, with a totally new administrative structure. Additionally new towns were created in former rural areas and old towns were remodelled. In this way regional identities changed markedly in the GDR.¹³⁵

2.5 East Germany: Mid-1971 to 1989

While the Ulbricht period was characterised by the process of Sovietization presented as a social revolution, the Honecker epoch was typified by day-to-day ‘determination to improve living conditions in the present for the citizens of a now apparently securely established “actually existing socialism”’.¹³⁶ In 1972 Honecker declared a process of ‘no taboos’ with respect to culture, although in 1976 the satirist and musician Wolf Biermann was forcibly excluded from the GDR.¹³⁷ Television was one means by which the party inculcated its view of *Heimat*. The *Chronicle of the Mark*, broadcast January and February 1983, was phenomenally successful, attracting large numbers of viewers, particularly from the intelligentsia.¹³⁸ It focused on the fictional Güterloh, in the Mark Brandenburg, comparable to the West German village

¹³⁴ Expellee interviews; for example Heinz Briese, Adam Pippus, Hubertus Scholz, Theodor Seethaler.

¹³⁵ Fulbrook, *The People's State*, p. 63.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹³⁸ Palmowski, pp. 128-29.

of Schabbach in the Hunsrück in Edgar Reitz's *Heimat*, shown a year later. The East German series 'presented a complex mirror of the whole population between 1939 and 1946' and showed GDR citizens 'assuming true freedom and nationhood as socialists'.¹³⁹

Through Honecker's rule the state continued to define a sense of national identity that reflected the state's goals and values and was enforced by its power structures. The 'public transcript', which reflects the goals and values of the state determined a top-down socialist model which the SED expected its citizens to adopt and consider their *Heimat*. In practice citizens submitted to this, however, they were also simultaneously able to engage in activities and develop notions that ran alongside the party's views of nationhood and patriotism in a 'hidden transcript'.¹⁴⁰ When socialism suddenly collapsed the 'meanings of community and locality, which had evolved despite democratic centralism' remained.¹⁴¹ Palmowski claims that the state's insistence on the new *Heimat* was negotiated by GDR citizens who openly professed a sense of socialist 'national' identity while finding ways to develop their own identifications within the *Heimat* paradigm. This explains how socialist national identity was so suddenly and apparently so easily abandoned in 1989. However, his theory arguably overstates the importance of *Heimat*. As he points out, *Heimat* represented just one field in which citizens developed a dual engagement, namely public conformity yet private identification.¹⁴² His theory also somewhat neglects the overwhelmingly individual nature of the notion of *Heimat*. A *Heimat* is a feeling, is *personal*

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 12-14. Palmowski builds on the framework used by James C. Scott.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 313.

¹⁴² Ibid.

and cannot be easily enforced. Although the SED attempted to redesignate the concept of *Heimat* away from a link to birthplace and childhood to the region where workers lived, this was not altogether successful, as Confino and Palmowski both suggest. The flood of people leaving the GDR before 1961 and also post-1989 was testimony to this fact. Expellees additionally suffered much discrimination, particularly in the early years and in rural areas like Mecklenburg-Vorpommern where they comprised almost 50% of the population. Nor were they able to acknowledge their old *Heimat*. By 1961 838,000 expellees (out of 2,669,400), namely a third, had already left the state to resettle in West Germany, somewhere they could acknowledge their cultural traditions as part of their identity. While there is no way of knowing whether this is a causal correlation, it represents 31.4% of the total number of refugees who fled the GDR, against a figure of 24.2% expellees in the population, that is, they are over-represented in the group of those leaving the GDR.¹⁴³ The rapid and enthusiastic founding of expellee clubs from 1990 was another indication of how important the old *Heimat* was to expellees.

Over forty years of socialism the state involved increasing numbers of people in its formal and informal political system, so rendering almost normal the imposed power structures, while at the same time Stasi practices grew exponentially. Fulbrook notes that IMs (*inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*) increased from 20,000 to 30,000 in the mid-1950s to 100,000 in 1968 and she estimates that taking account of turnover, around 500,000 people acted as informers in the Honecker regime.¹⁴⁴ Fulbrook's study reveals a very small power elite

¹⁴³ Ther, p. 340.

¹⁴⁴ Fulbrook, *The People's State*, p. 235.

with a multiplicity of ‘little honeycomb cells’ in a network of power.¹⁴⁵ Though there was undoubtedly repression the state was run by what Fulbrook terms a ‘participatory dictatorship’ where people could lead what they felt to be perfectly normal lives.¹⁴⁶ Expellees however, might not have felt this to be the case in a society where they were publicly expected to forget their past. Although they were seemingly successfully integrated, following the *Wende* many swiftly began to openly assert their expellee identity, turning to their pre-socialist identity in the face of the rapid and profound transformation into a capitalist society. *Heimat* attachments were perpetuated under the surface in the GDR but they were also a response to the new socio-political context which I argue is the prime shaper of cultural memory.

2.6 Post-*Wende*: East and West Germany

Expellees in post-*Wende* west Germany continued to erect monuments at a rate of six in 1990 and seven in 1991 and *Heimatstuben* activity also increased at this time. East German commemoration commenced in 1992; four monuments were erected in the first year and two the following year. Between 1994 to 1996 twenty-eight monuments were erected in east Germany alone, with another sixteen in west Germany making a total for the three years of forty-four. With the caesura of the *Wende* and ratification of the new borders came full realisation that the territorial *Heimat* was gone for good. Reunification allowed commemoration to be considered across west and east Germany, and partnerships were established between expellee clubs.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 247.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 3-5.

Funding for cultivation of the old eastern culture was gradually increased under the Kohl government from 1982; by 1998 it stood at a level of 52 million deutschmarks. Part of this assistance helped establish the *Schlesisches Museum* in Görlitz and the Potsdam *Kulturforum Östliches Europa*.¹⁴⁷ From April 1989 the *Bundesinstitut für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa* (BKM) began its work, based on Paragraph 96 of the BVFG. It undertakes research and promotes the history, literature, language, *Volkskunde* and art history of the old eastern lands.¹⁴⁸ Younger generations now visit the former territories (some regions like the Russian part of East Prussia were difficult to visit before the *Wende*), and develop their own image of the *Heimat* spoken about by their grandparents, but this time alongside the present inhabitants who themselves are often interested in the old German past of their lands.¹⁴⁹

Unification facilitated discussion of the National Socialist past for the first time as one nation. Early fears that post-*Wende* the Nazi past would be relegated behind the crimes of communism to offset the crimes of National Socialism were unfounded and the GDR past was eventually absorbed into a commemorative landscape which prioritised remembrance of the Holocaust and the Third Reich.¹⁵⁰ However, there were some signs of conflation of the victims of the two regimes. In 1990 on the occasion of the first meeting of the reunified parliament Helmut Kohl called for a minute's silence in honour of

¹⁴⁷ Bergsdorf, pp. 64-67.

¹⁴⁸ From 2000 the institute has worked in cooperation with the Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg.

¹⁴⁹ Großbongardt, Annette and Norbert E. Pötzl, "Randlage mit Bollwerksfunktion." Der Osteuropahistoriker Andreas Kossert über den Mythos Ostpreußen, den zerstörerischen Nationalismus und den neuen Blick auf die Geschichte' in 'Die Deutschen im Osten: Auf den Spuren einer verlorenen Zeit', *Der Spiegel, Geschichte*, 2011, pp. 44-47 (p. 45).

¹⁵⁰ Beattie, pp. 148-49.

Nazi victims, followed immediately by the same for victims of the communist regime.¹⁵¹ Additionally, in 1993 Kohl's *Neue Wache* monument replaced the GDR's theme of anti-fascism 'To the victims of fascism and militarism' with a sentiment akin to anti-totalitarianism 'To the victims of war and the rule of violence'. Following criticism that this encompassed all victims of all totalitarian regimes an inscription was added which listed groups of victims but it did not mention the perpetrators and also commemorated the 'fallen' of World War Two. Furthermore it was ambiguous in its phraseology about which 'rule of violence' or which victims were meant.

The dichotomy between victims and perpetrators that characterised postwar discussion of how to deal with the Nazi past continued in the unified Germany. The intention to erect a national memorial in Berlin for Jewish victims of the Holocaust provoked considerable debate from the mid-1990s and it was eventually inaugurated on 10 May 2005.¹⁵² The conflicting views expressed in the public realm over these years did not simply rehearse the arguments of the earlier postwar years and led to politicians and intellectuals arguing that the memorial was not as important as the debate regarding it.¹⁵³ Issues concerned the memorial's function and location and whether it should be solely for Jewish victims.¹⁵⁴ Debate centred on the construction of Germany's national identity; both Aleida Assmann and Jürgen Habermas understood the memorial as a 'symbol of respect for universal human rights'; both arguing that a visible commitment to the transnational would reshape

¹⁵¹ Moeller, 'War Stories', p. 1045.

¹⁵² For a useful summary of the debate see Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, pp. 194-232.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 196.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 213-14.

national consciousness.¹⁵⁵ Others, such as historian Heinrich August Winkler felt that this would base German identity in terms of ‘negative nationalism’.¹⁵⁶ The final consensus resulted in the Holocaust memorial standing as a highly visible symbol of official cultural memory that commemorated Germany’s past perpetration.

Over this period, attention was additionally focused on German perpetrators by the *Wehrmacht* travelling exhibition between 1995 and 1999 that documented the participation of the *Wehrmacht* in the Holocaust. This attracted over 900,000 visitors and unleashed local right and left-wing demonstrations as well as powerful debate, as it became clearer to a wider public that atrocities committed in the East were not just carried out by elite units, but by ordinary soldiers.¹⁵⁷ Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s book ‘Hitler’s Willing Executioners’, published in 1996, which argued that a centuries-old uniquely German eliminationist anti-Semitism had led to the Holocaust, was criticised by politicians and historians but enjoyed popular support, indicating a shift in broader public attitudes. The public debate thus enhanced general awareness of the horrors of the Holocaust.¹⁵⁸ In 1998, cultural memory which at this point was widely concerned with acknowledging German guilt was publicly shown to be at odds with private memory, exemplified by the Walser-Bubis debate. In Martin Walser’s acceptance speech for the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade he argued for a reinstatement of the ‘authentic’ private conscience, claiming that the public realm had appropriated the National Socialist past which continually represented what

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 216.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 144.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 117.

he called ‘our disgrace’ to serve the interests of contemporary politics. Ignatz Bubis, the then President of the Central Council of German Jews was appalled by the standing ovation given to Walser’s speech and a public debate later ensued.¹⁵⁹ The speech seemed to suggest that the political left and maybe even the Jews were forcing Germans to focus on their guilt for the Nazi past by the manipulation of media discourse which was thus ‘preventing a return to “normality” and self-confidence’.¹⁶⁰ The amount of public support given to Walser indicates a rift between family memory that remembers hardship, suffering and heroism and official, public memory of the Nazi past.¹⁶¹

Ongoing public discussion coincided with a significant shift in both historiographical and popular discourse from an emphasis on ‘hard facts’ to human interest and emotionalisation that makes more use of communicative memory and eyewitnesses, but as Schmitz notes, there is a danger that historical contexts and processes will be disregarded in favour of sentiment.¹⁶² Harald Welzer et al.’s study of family memories found that within forty families and three generations, almost two-thirds of those interviewed showed a *kumulative Heroisierung* of their forefathers’ past lives, with a tendency to turn grandparents into heroes or victims despite historical facts that contradicted this view.¹⁶³ While the grandchildren were not Nazi sympathisers and regarded the Holocaust as an atrocious crime this study shows that family memory can be manipulated and demonstrates the danger of including witness testimony in historical accounts. I noted the significant number of television

¹⁵⁹ Schmitz, ‘The Birth of the Collective’, pp. 100-101.

¹⁶⁰ Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, p. 177.

¹⁶¹ Schmitz, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

¹⁶² Ibid., pp. 5-6.

¹⁶³ Welzer, Harald, Sabine Moller and Karoline Tschuggnall, ‘*Opa war kein Nazi*’: *Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2005), p. 54.

productions devoted to the expulsions and the old *Heimat* in my introduction, and Chapters Four and Five will discuss some of the tensions between communicative and cultural memory. Cultural memory norms are not merely passively consumed by the wider population, including expellees, but the interaction between public and private is more complex, moving in both directions and not rigidly delineated. Private memory can reflect, reinforce and also contradict the dominant official memory. As Niven notes, the resurgence of narratives of German suffering from the 1990s reveals ‘an invasion of the public realm by private memory’.¹⁶⁴

Issues that tended to encourage expellee memorialisation like the fiftieth anniversary of the expulsions and war end and the impetus of the passing-away of the last eyewitnesses were augmented by the empathy towards expellees generated by comparisons with their suffering during the ‘ethnic cleansing’ of the mid-1990s Balkan Wars. The situation in Kosovo in 1999 both enabled a rethinking on the political left about the suffering of expellees, and caused a new generation of children to enquire about the suffering of their grandparents in a more expansive context of both perpetration and victimhood.¹⁶⁵ A number of historical comparisons were made to enlist support for military intervention in the Balkans, most notably from politician Rudolf Scharping, who drew analogies to the Holocaust; but also from expellee organisations who sought to capitalise on the situation.¹⁶⁶ While direct comparisons between Albanians and German expellees are inappropriate, multiple memories always exist at any one time and are

¹⁶⁴ Niven, *Germans as Victims*, p. 20. Examples are discussed in Chapter Five.

¹⁶⁵ von Oppen, Karoline and Stefan Wolff, ‘From the Margins to the Centre? The Discourse on Expellees and Victimhood in Germany’ in *Germans as Victims* ed. by Niven, pp. 194-209 (p. 207).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

refreshed by contemporary contexts. Around this time public sympathy swung towards the expellees: 36% of all Germans and 40% of those over sixty-five believed the expulsion was as great a crime as the Holocaust, according to a poll in *Der Spiegel* in 1995.¹⁶⁷ This deeply problematic finding which was clearly only a snapshot of a group of people's viewpoints must be viewed with scepticism. However, public memory culture, the official, normative memory of the past, was now moving towards being able to acknowledge expellees' communicative memory albeit generally within a context that recognised German perpetration.

Aleida Assmann claims that until the late 1970s, memories of flight and expulsion in West Germany were kept alive in a right-wing political discourse to argue against the recognition of the Oder-Neiße borders and to agitate for German compensation in Eastern Europe in a rhetoric that equated the experiences of seven million expellees with those of the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust.¹⁶⁸ The climate of contrition and acknowledgment of Nazi crimes since the mid to late-1990s has meant that discussion of German victims is no longer considered politically incorrect yet some commentators feel that Holocaust memory will once again be marginalised by narratives of German victimhood.¹⁶⁹ Indeed in some extreme right-wing discourse comparisons are still being drawn.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, Erika Steinbach's campaign for a Centre against Expulsions has been criticised for recasting expellee memories as a national symbol that stands in direct

¹⁶⁷ Moeller, 'War Stories', p. 1009.

¹⁶⁸ Assmann, Aleida, 'On the (In)compatibility of Guilt and Suffering in German Memory', *German Life and Letters*, 59 (2006), 187-200 (p. 190).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

¹⁷⁰ See, for example, Eibicht Rolf-Josef and Anne Hipp, *Der Vertreibungs-Holocaust: Politik zur Wiedergutmachung eines Jahrtausend-Verbrechens* (Ries: Deutsche Stimme, 2002).

competition with the Holocaust monument as a memorial to German victims.¹⁷¹

Berger notes that although German victimhood is coming again to the forefront in debates on the past, many commentators consider that it should now be possible to discuss German victims without seeking to offset German suffering against German guilt. He argues that the acceptance of Nazi crimes since the mid-1990s, and the public acknowledgment of the complicity of wide sections of German society, has now made this possible.¹⁷² Thus it is due to the institutionalisation of Holocaust memory in German memory culture that makes it now feasible to acknowledge German suffering. As Karl Wilds comments, in Germany's consensual culture of contrition the traditional political polarities that characterised postwar discussion of the past are no longer applicable.¹⁷³

3. Waves of Memory: Trauma, Taboos and Generations

In this section I consider the effect of repressed trauma, taboos and generational turnover on the production of memory and memorialisation. I have already discussed how the Mitscherlichs attributed societal trauma as the cause of the early postwar silence on the Nazi past but here I will also consider the effect of trauma on individuals. Since the 1980s post-traumatic stress disorder has been identified as the cause of various symptoms like sleeplessness, irritability and nightmares.¹⁷⁴ Forty-five years after the war a third of Norwegian and Dutch war veterans have exhibited some symptoms of

¹⁷¹ Assmann, 'On the (in)compatibility', p. 197.

¹⁷² Berger, 'On Taboos', pp. 217-18.

¹⁷³ Wilds, p. 96.

¹⁷⁴ Hirsch, Helga, *Schweres Gepäck: Flucht und Vertreibung als Lebensthema* (Hamburg: Körber-Stiftung, 2004), pp. 230-31.

this disorder.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, a third of Frankfurt psychologist Dagmar Soerensen-Cassier's patients come from expellee families; an article claims that the second generation in expellee families feel they have to 'alles wieder gut machen' and that the third generation have also adopted certain feelings: they have 'Angst geerbt und Rollen eingenommen'.¹⁷⁶ Sabine Bode, Helga Hirsch and Kossert all discuss how the burden of the event of flight and expulsion has caused trauma-related symptoms in some expellees.¹⁷⁷ However, all three commentators evidence the same, fairly limited 1999 Hamburg survey results of 269 people who responded to a questionnaire sent to 736 individuals.¹⁷⁸ Responses to surveys are not clinical diagnoses, and questionnaires provide in any case a mere indication of feeling; they are often unrepresentative, biased and unreliable. In addition there is a danger that people anticipate 'correct' answers. It could also be simply that older people who have had early life-changing experiences remember and talk about these events late in life, as they assume great importance in their minds at that stage, or that physical symptoms that are attributed to past trauma are coincidental. Although trauma is indeed more applicable to individuals than societies, I would argue that using terminology like 'trauma' and 'therapy' is, to some extent, applying contemporary discourse to produce a retrospective view on a past phenomenon. People's memories are influenced by present day cultural memory where psychotherapy and therapeutic confrontation with repressed past trauma are terms and conditions that are part of contemporary discourse.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Cited in Leo, Maxim, 'Die Enkel der Vertriebenen', *Berliner Zeitung*, 21/22 March 2009, pp. 1-2.

¹⁷⁷ Bode, Sabine, *Die vergessene Generation: Die Kriegskinder brechen ihr Schweigen* (Munich: Piper, 2007), pp. 200-1, Kossert, p. 328, Hirsch, Helga, p. 231.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

This wider cultural phenomenon is exemplified by the case of the expellees where the reframing of the past is undertaken in a way that places a premium on victimhood and trauma as a mark of dignity or experience that commands recognition in the public realm.

The return of discourse about German victims in the 1990s has been attributed to the release of repression following trauma of the past. W. G. Sebald's *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (1999), which focused on the lack of attention given in postwar German literature to the air wars, appeared to reiterate the Mitscherlichs' theory whereby Germans' energies were directed into reconstruction rather than engaging with their guilt thus affecting the ability to address their own trauma.¹⁷⁹ The wave of family novels about life under National Socialism from the mid 1990s similarly suggests repression due to trauma.¹⁸⁰ Aleida Assmann notes that a traumatic encounter can result in suppression and silence, which may be broken many years later.¹⁸¹ She quotes, for example, the writer Uwe Timm's use of family narratives about the Hamburg firestorm, which he wrote as self-therapy in *Am Beispiel meines Bruders* (2003) almost sixty years after the event.¹⁸² However, I have already discussed, and will further discuss in this section, the *lack* of a silence about the Nazi past in German memory. Additionally, there is little evidence to show that substantial numbers of East German expellees whose memories were undoubtedly subject to suppression are traumatised, thus trauma theory as an explanation for memory waves, and memorialisation, in my view does not stand up to scrutiny.

¹⁷⁹ Schmitz, 'Introduction', pp. 7-9.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 9. Examples include Hans-Ulrich Treichel's *Der Verlorene* (1998) and Ulla Hahn's *Unscharfe Bilder* (2003).

¹⁸¹ Assmann, *Der lange Schatten*, p. 108.

¹⁸² Assmann, 'On the (In)compatibility', p. 104.

Some descendants of expellees have engaged in work connected with the old *Heimat*, like working in *Heimatstuben*, or running expellee clubs, and in some cases claim to be traumatised by the past.¹⁸³ A concept that could explain this phenomenon is that of ‘postmemory’, ‘mediated not through recollection but through imaginative investment and creation’, developed by Marianne Hirsch with respect to descendants of Holocaust survivors.

Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated.¹⁸⁴

Hirsch claims it may also apply to other second generation memories of traumatic experiences. While the theory could ostensibly be applicable to descendants of expellees as it shows how family memories can be perpetuated, as well as energy invested in the preserving of the historical past, the notion has its dangers. It leaves no room for individual agency or memories and how they are being formed within a second generation and its context. Additionally, postmemory suggests that the historical past is not portrayed by agents with direct memories of an event, rather by representative agents and therefore invites rather arbitrary reconstructions of the past. Memories in the first instance are notoriously malleable, consequently second and third generation ‘postmemories’ will be even more unreliable; indeed they are fictional. Anne Fuchs notes the association between trauma theory and postmemory, whereby the former argues that history cannot be witnessed as it is intrinsically traumatic, and postmemory suggests that eyewitness testimony as well as our cognitive approaches to the past are always subject to

¹⁸³ Leo, pp. 1-2.

¹⁸⁴ Hirsch, Marianne, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 22.

repression and distortion, therefore both depreciate ‘the role of cognition in our understanding of history’.¹⁸⁵ I will thus not use the concept of postmemory in my thesis as I feel it is flawed. Some expellee descendants may feel a powerful attachment to the old *Heimat* but this results from a complex interaction between past and present that is not explicable either through a naively understood process of ‘remembering’ history nor, however, through the ‘imaginative investment’ of memories ‘inherited’ from older generations.

Descendants of expellees react to their parents’ or grandparents’ past in a variety of ways. Some family members do feel a great tie to the old *Heimat*.¹⁸⁶ For example, the grandson of an expellee, Oliver Dix, was elected to the *BdV-Präsidium* when he was just twenty-six,¹⁸⁷ and since 2010 has been the Chairperson of the BdV-Lower Saxony. Furthermore, Rita Kennel, the daughter of an expellee, co-runs the Neustettin Museum in Eutin, and as I detail later in Chapter Four, she feels a great affinity to the old *Heimat*, despite it never being spoken about in her family.¹⁸⁸ Conversely, a recent publication points out that some grandchildren feel no kinship with the old *Heimat*: historian Joachim Rogall’s children regard it as no part of family identity, it was merely ‘die Geschichte von Oma oder Opa’ and the German East seems as far removed to them as the Thirty Years War.¹⁸⁹ Irrespective of private discussion within the family, the effect of regular public accenting of the old territories through *Heimat* days and other commemoration, namely

¹⁸⁵ Fuchs, pp. 51-52.

¹⁸⁶ Lehmann, Albrecht, *Im Fremden ungewollt Zuhause: Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in Westdeutschland 1945-1990* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1991), p. 79.

¹⁸⁷ Leo, p. 2.

¹⁸⁸ Interview, Rita Kennel.

¹⁸⁹ Großbongardt, p. 18.

factors external to the individual process of remembering and forgetting, could have the result of binding descendants to the old *Heimat*, or alienating them from it. These examples suggest that theories such as postmemory are of limited value.

In a discussion of social memory and trauma Aleida Assmann argues that the changing dynamic of a society's memory is engendered by generational change exemplified by the 1968-generation's role as a catalyst in breaking the repressive silence surrounding National Socialism. Furthermore, she notes the role this generation played in erecting monuments, producing films and developing museums to portray this history. She comments that memorialisation is usually observed 15-20 years after shameful or traumatic events, citing the city of Dallas' late commemoration of President Kennedy's murder as an example.¹⁹⁰ When applied to expellee memorialisation though, where 130 expellee monuments had already been erected before 1950,¹⁹¹ this theory does not stand as a general explanation; the expulsion was undoubtedly a traumatic event and yet memorialisation faced no such delay in postwar West Germany.

The term 'generation' generally describes an age cohort that shares a similar set of historical experiences and cultural influences; however, there must also be a shared historical perspective and an awareness of generational cohesion.¹⁹² Generations cannot, however, be summarised as discrete entities and behavioural characteristics will differ between individual members of a generation according to life experiences, and they can also span several generations. Albrecht Lehmann comments, for instance, on the vast

¹⁹⁰ Assmann, *Der lange Schatten*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁹¹ Hesse and Purpus, p. 55.

¹⁹² Fuchs, p. 9.

differences between a five year old expellee and a ten year old local, and a seventeen year old expellee and a twenty-one year old *Kriegsheimkehrer*, all of whom are classified as *Nachkriegsjugend* but who are shaped by completely different experiences.¹⁹³ Expellees alive today who remember the event are all over seventy years of age, have shared similar experiences yet there is no one specific unifying factor. Certainly they were all expelled but how individuals understand this experience differs from case to case. Some people integrated more easily than others. Some had very bad flight experiences; some not. Some are exceptionally keen on *Heimat* memorialisation and others prefer to forget, or at least not to commemorate that aspect of their past. A 1992-3 study of 212 expellees in Bavaria born between 1900 and 1931 concluded that while there were generational attitudinal differences in expellees in the early postwar years these have weakened over the years: ‘die Heimatvertriebenen in ihrer Lebensgeschichte [haben] den biographisch-historischen Bruch auf unterschiedliche Weise bewältigt, wobei zunehmend Faktoren eine Rolle gespielt haben, die nicht mehr auf die Generationszugehörigkeit zurückzuführen sind’.¹⁹⁴

While generational dynamics are often cited as an explanation for the memory waves of West Germany,¹⁹⁵ I believe that the key factor was the socio-political climate which framed the context in which cultural and communicative memory developed. While it is true that generational turnover coincided with changes in the memory landscape, namely a move from the

¹⁹³ Lehmann, p. 55.

¹⁹⁴ von Engelhardt, Michael, ‘Generation und historisch-biographische Erfahrung: Die Bewältigung von Flucht und Vertreibung in Generationenvergleich’ in *Vertriebene in Deutschland: Interdisziplinäre Ergebnisse und Forschungsperspektiven* ed. by Dierck Hoffmann, Marita Krauss and Michael Schwartz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), pp. 331-58 (p. 358).

¹⁹⁵ Kansteiner, p. 135.

war generation (victim-centred) to the student movement generation (perpetrator-centred) and on to the second postwar generation (victim and perpetrator-centred), therefore representing each generation's interpretative preferences, a generation is a complex body of widely dissimilar individuals. New perspectives on the past develop continuously and interactively and produce progressively more multifaceted layers of analysis and interpretation, subject to a variety of contemporary political and cultural factors that are anchored in public and political institutions and which set the context for remembering 'from above'. As Aleida Assmann argues, collective memory, namely political or national memory, is much more strongly formed than generational memory and through its operation mental pictures become icons, and stories become myths that have powers of conviction and normative strength.¹⁹⁶ In this way a myth assumes lasting significance which 'hält die Vergangenheit in der Gegenwart einer Gesellschaft präsent und ihr eine Orientierungskraft für die Zukunft abgewinnt'.¹⁹⁷ Additionally, as I have shown, although changing memory waves were indeed associated with generational interests and perspectives, they have never, as Wulf Kansteiner notes, 'reflected the political and intellectual endeavors of whole generations'.¹⁹⁸

My research shows how monuments were erected most often when memory discourse was more favourable to the notion of expellees as victims, or at key anniversaries of the expulsion. Furthermore, as expellees attempted to integrate into West German society, they used monuments in the early years to stake a claim on the old *Heimat*, mourn victims of the expulsion and

¹⁹⁶ Assmann, *Der lange Schatten*, p. 40.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Kansteiner, p. 137.

attempted in places to assert a distinctive cultural identity against that of the locals. Later monument inscriptions still focused on the theme of *Heimat* but the sentiment became gradually less revanchist. In the post-*Wende* period some inscriptions demonstrated how expellees were now acknowledged as honoured citizens in the new *Heimat*, or thanked the latter for assistance and their general sentiment became in the main more reconciliatory. I thus argue that the integration process also influenced memorialisation, but always set within the parameters of the socio-political context that favoured or resisted commemoration of expellee suffering; integration and memorialisation is not a causal relationship.

In Bertram Lattimore's 1974 study of expellees in Eutin, Schleswig-Holstein he doubts that expellee organisations will continue to memorialise the old *Heimat*; he argues that expellees are more or less assimilated and expects that commemorative activity will decline and peter out.¹⁹⁹ Likewise Karl Heinz Gehrman claimed that the early *Kulturpflege*, which he believed took place to assert expellee cultural identity against that of the locals, would die out.²⁰⁰ Successful integration at this point was gauged by socio-economic factors, namely, that expellees had work and accommodation. They were also becoming more accepted by the local population. By the late 1950s successful assimilation had already been claimed by both West and East Germany, somewhat due to Cold War rhetoric.²⁰¹ Politically, the BHE, founded in 1950 to promote expellee interests, although originally successful in electoral terms, failed to achieve the necessary 5% level in the *Bundestagwahlen* of

¹⁹⁹ Lattimore, p. 133.

²⁰⁰ Gehrman, Karl Heinz, 'Kulturpflege und Kulturpolitik' in *Die Vertriebenen in Westdeutschland: Ihre Eingliederung und Ihr Einfluss auf Gesellschaft und Geistesleben* ed. by Eugen Lemberg and Friedrich Edding (Kiel: Ferdinand Hirt, 1959), pp. 159-203 (p. 162).

²⁰¹ Ther, p. 328. See pages 329 to 347 for full details of both approaches.

1957.²⁰² The increase in ‘mixed’ marriages between locals and expellees in the 1950s and 1960s which were originally frowned upon by the local population pointed to a social index of successful assimilation.²⁰³ However, expellees in Eutin, and elsewhere, continued to memorialise and still do so. The small town of Eutin has four expellee monuments, two erected after 1974 (in 1975/8 and 1985) and a thriving *Heimatmuseum*, which opened in 1992. The case of Eutin is not atypical. In reality, inequalities between expellees and locals persisted for decades. In the mid-1960s, for instance, only half as many expellees owned their homes in comparison to locals, and as late as 1971 in the whole of West Germany only 24.2% of expellees were home-owners compared to 32.6% of locals.²⁰⁴ Paul Lüttinger’s 1986 study showed expellees’ economic position as less favourable than that of locals in 1971. He concluded that only the second generation of expellees achieved full economic integration.²⁰⁵ Although life for expellees improved after the early postwar years, partly due to the *Lastenausgleich* and the *Wirtschaftswunder*, they were still often classified as foreign. The design of some monuments in Chapter Three shows the attempts by expellees to assert their distinctive cultural identity against the locals.

Following the *Wende* and intensified debate about both German perpetrators and victims, expellees have increasingly commemorated their past due to a memory landscape that positively encouraged the memorialisation of their experiences. As Jan-Werner Müller notes, the ‘preoccupation with memory’ in the last thirty years or so has resulted in ‘a

²⁰² Beer, p. 124.

²⁰³ Connor, p. 163.

²⁰⁴ Beer, pp. 124-25.

²⁰⁵ Connor, pp. 2 and 235-36.

kind of memory of power', in which groups with memories of past injustices advance the 'recovery of [their] unrecorded history, and the social recognition of their particular collective experience'.²⁰⁶ Moreover, repeated claims from the mid-1990s that expellee suffering can now, *at last*, be publicly discussed has engendered a climate whereby memorialisation is almost expected. In his collection of expellee accounts Ulrich Völklein comments: 'Sie wollen lediglich, dass ihre Erleben nicht vergessen, sondern endlich wahrgenommen werden'.²⁰⁷ This slightly disingenuous claim which purports to be apolitical, is a claim for public recognition and, as such, inherently political. While there is clear evidence of a taboo about the expulsions in the GDR this rhetoric is also sometimes applied, erroneously, to West German expellees in the post-unification climate.

Ian Connor believes that integration of expellees in West Germany was hindered as they 'had never been afforded the opportunity to discuss and come to terms with the atrocities they had witnessed or suffered during their flight or expulsion'.²⁰⁸ In this reading Connor links successful integration to therapeutic articulation of expellee suffering, an unsustainable claim, especially as expellee suffering was a prominent feature of the 1950s West German memory landscape. Similarly, Manfred Kittel, the Director of the SFVV, has researched popular media, the *Deutsche Ostdienst* and political party and governmental records, to argue that along with their territories,

²⁰⁶ Müller, Jan-Werner, 'Introduction: the Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory' in *Memory and Power in Post-war Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* ed. by Jan-Werner Müller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-38 (pp. 15-17).

²⁰⁷ Völklein, Ulrich, '*Mitleid war von niemand zu erwarten*': *Das Schicksal der deutschen Vertriebenen* (Munich: Droemer, 2005), pp. 16-17. In this project large numbers of expellees had answered an advertisement of the *Deutschen Ostdienst* and other publicity leaflets of the *Bund der Vertriebenen* (BdV) in November 2003 and their accounts supplement reports made directly after the event which are in archives in Berlin and Bayreuth.

²⁰⁸ Connor, p. 237.

expellees' cultural identity was gradually eroded from public memory and thus became a victim of foreign policy concerns over the 1960s and 1970s. He shows how in the early to mid 1960s West German journalists, scholars and politicians associated expellees with the worst excesses of the National Socialist regime, thereby implying that the expulsions were a logical reaction to the crimes of the Third Reich. Gradually political parties withdrew support from the expellees (with the exception of the CSU-CDU) and with the rise of *Ostpolitik* the BdV and its supporters became increasingly isolated. Expellee cultural identity, according to Kittel, became effectively suppressed in public history and memory, and driven out of collective consciousness.²⁰⁹ Use of the *Deutsche Ostdienst* in Kittel's study, however, is not exactly impartial as it is a BdV publication. While there was clearly public suppression in the GDR there was no such prohibition on discussing expellee suffering in West Germany, although at times the theme was not empathetically discussed in public. As Moeller notes, due to the sheer amount of expellee commemorative activity in West Germany ten years after the expulsion 'obsession, not repression' best fits West German memories of the lost *Heimat*.²¹⁰ Hellmuth Auerbach's review of material published between the 1950s and 1990s shows a steady flood of publications about expellee experiences and although he concedes there may have been a drop-off in the 1960s, the 1980s produced a revitalisation in academic discourse on the topic; a 1989 bibliography by Gertrud Krallert-Sattler counted almost 5,000 titles on the theme.²¹¹ Both Connor and Kittel's claims of a taboo thus seem overstated due to the sheer

²⁰⁹ Kittel, Manfred, *Vertreibung der Vertriebenen? Der historische deutsche Osten in der Erinnerungskultur der Bundesrepublik (1961-1982)* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007).

²¹⁰ Moeller, 'Sinking Ships', p. 159.

²¹¹ Wittlinger, Ruth, 'Taboo or Tradition? The "Germans as Victims" Theme in the Federal Republic until the mid-1990s' in *Germans as Victims* ed. by Niven, pp. 62-75 (p. 72).

volume of commemorative activity and written accounts, although there is evidence to suggest that some expellees kept silent for a variety of reasons and this varied according to the political climate. As Kossert comments in a recent publication: ‘Es gab aber auch so viel Schmerz bei diesem Thema, dass vieles tabu war’.²¹² However, I would argue that this sentiment applied mostly to the 1970s and early 1980s when expellee suffering was not discussed sympathetically in public, and at this time fewer monuments were erected. Likewise historian Joachim Rogall, born in 1959, points out, ‘Es gab nie ein Tabu, aber viele Hemmungen’ and remarks that the whole debate has led to a kind of voluntary taboo in his generation, who were actually bored by the constant Sunday afternoon discussions about life as it was before 1945.²¹³ They regarded the topic as a closed chapter; discussion could potentially disturb relationships with neighbouring lands. In 2011 ARD showed a two-part documentary ‘Fremde Heimat’ which hints at a taboo in West Germany; some expellees kept silent, it claims, fearing discrimination.²¹⁴ Helmut Schmitz asks if the issue is not *whether* German suffering has been addressed, but rather *how* it was addressed.²¹⁵ He notes an argument which suggests that there is no evidence of a lack of public and cultural commemoration of German losses in the early postwar years. However, because German suffering had always been framed by ‘political interests, economic rebuilding and denial of guilt’, such framing meant that there had been neither proper

²¹² Großbongardt and Pötzl, p. 44.

²¹³ Großbongardt, Annette, ‘Neue Schlüssel zur Geschichte: Die Enkelgeneration der Vertriebenen sieht die Vergangenheit unverkrampfter’ in ‘Die Deutschen im Osten. Auf den Spuren einer verlorenen Zeit’, *Der Spiegel, Geschichte*, 2011, pp. 12-19 (p. 18).

²¹⁴ ‘Vom Schicksal der Vertriebenen nach 1945: ARD-Zweiteiler wirft einen kritischen Blick auf die Erlebnisse, die nach dem Krieg zwölf Millionen Menschen teilten’, *Kieler Nachrichten*, 14 March 2011, p. 25. The film, and book, involved a team of writers comprising directors Henning Burk and Erika Fehse; journalists Susanne Spröer and Gudrun Walter; and the historian Marita Krauss.

²¹⁵ Schmitz, ‘Introduction’, pp. 11-12.

mourning nor empathy.²¹⁶ From the mid-1990s the socio-political climate changed; the memory landscape that had now embedded German perpetration at its core permitted empathetic discussion of German victims once again, albeit preferably when framed within a historical context. Moreover, the increased academic interest in the expulsions from the 1980s and post-*Wende* publications that examined integration difficulties like Kossert's *Kalte Heimat* and Burk et al.'s *Fremde Heimat* refreshed or reshaped expellee memories. Although there had not been a taboo, public discussion in the contemporary socio-political context that repeatedly stressed that there had been a taboo thus persuaded individuals to reframe their memories. Commemoration by west German expellees increased as a result of the desire for their suffering to be further acknowledged, and concurrently post-unification east German expellees were now permitted to memorialise.

In May 2010 I met a small group of expellees at the Jena expellee club. When the club was formed in 1990 it attracted considerable support; 2,000 expellees quickly became members illustrating that attempts over a period of forty years by the regime to force amnesia about the old homeland had been unsuccessful.²¹⁷ On 20 May 1949 there were 10,822 expellees living in Jena.²¹⁸ If one considers that natural reductions over the years and emigration prior to 1961 would have shrunk this number, a noteworthy proportion of expellees became club members later, showing the topic remained significant for the generation that experienced the expulsions. In answer to my question as to why commemoration is important the first answer I received is one that

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ In 2013 there are around 260 members, reduced from 400 in 2010. Interested expellees have either died, or say they are too poor to pay the fees and too infirm to attend events. Second or third generations do not participate in activities. Interview, Heini Pagel.

²¹⁸ SA Jena, F385 Statistische Berichte, 1948-9.

expellees frequently offer; it is about ‘die Bewahrung der Geschichte, die kulturelle Tradition’. Through the course of many conversations I have ascertained that expellees report that they want to preserve the past for their descendants, and for the local people of the second *Heimat*, and are keen to tell the ‘truth’ about their past. When expellees speak of the importance of preserving the truth they articulate a desire for their account of the past to be publicly recognised and authorised as history, yet memories are subjective and there are many competing versions of the truth. Indeed history itself, in the way it is investigated and written down, is not necessarily objective, but is less subjective than memory and follows a different set of criteria against which the ‘truth’ of an expellee memory can be scientifically tested. When specifically asked about the purpose of monuments, Jena club chairperson Heini Pagel said: ‘Die Denkmäler sind ein Zeichen der Geschichte. Sie werden den Alltag der Kinder überleben’,²¹⁹ so exemplifying Jan Assmann’s theory that memorials, as a facet of cultural memory characterise the sacred fixing of a group’s identity, the *Festtag*, as opposed to the *Alltag*.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how the official cultural memory of a nation frames memories of the past. Both East and West German expellees’ memories were shaped and refreshed by the specific political and social contexts in which they lived. East German expellees were compelled to observe the SED’s ‘public transcript’ of the new socialist *Heimat* which precluded public discussion of the old; the loss of the *Heimat* for them was

²¹⁹ Interview, Pagel.

both territorial and psychological, although to my knowledge there are no significant or widespread signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. This taboo prohibited public commemoration until 1992. West German expellees were able to discuss past suffering within expellee associations and their memories were framed through a complex interaction with the wider societal discussion of German perpetration and victimhood in the West German public sphere.

I argue that the key driver for the changes in memory waves and levels of memorialisation in West Germany was the dynamic socio-political context that stimulates cultural memory. Unification triggered a wider debate about the Nazi past and discussion about official cultural memory exposed private family and individual memories that were often in conflict with the public version. Generational memory develops within the parameters of cultural memory and it also has the ability to challenge the official version of national history. This was less of an issue in East Germany as there was little public space for memories that diverged from the official state version. In recent years generations have been seen as analytical categories or processes that drive history or the memory of history but I have shown that this stimulus is subsidiary to the socio-political shifts. West German cultural memory developed from a continual interactive process of political and intellectual negotiation that was absent in the GDR. The public sphere in West Germany allowed a variety of competing views to be aired, unlike the GDR where divergent views had to be camouflaged or articulated covertly thus resulting in a more stagnant memory landscape.

I have discussed how expellees generally erected monuments as *Erinnerungsfiguren* to support their identity and in three main ways: to

influence how expulsion and the loss of the old *Heimat* is reflected in history and remembered in official as well as family memory; to assert their cultural identity against the locals, and to engender public acknowledgement of their suffering. As Jan Assmann comments, such cultural formations are a medium ‘durch das eine kollektive Identität aufgebaut und über Generationen hinweg aufrechterhalten wird’.²²⁰

The following table depicts the age of a person at the times of the expulsions, and in the decades that follow, in order to illustrate the generation that potentially erects monuments in the years shown. As I discussed earlier, there are no unifying factors in terms of experiences of flight, expulsion and subsequent integration within generations, although there are commonalities. In the immediate postwar years expellees from different generations were involved in monument erection, with different personal experiences.

Ages of Expellees and Years in which a Monument was erected

1945	1955	1965	1975	1985	1995	2005
10	20	30	40	50	60	70
20	30	40	50	60	70	80
30	40	50	60	70	80	90
40	50	60	70	80	90	
50	60	70	80	90		
60	70	80	90			
70	80	90				

The unique backgrounds of people involved in memorialisation meld with a specific socio-political context to influence the form any memorial takes. The following chapter investigates these variables.

²²⁰ Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 139.

CHAPTER 3: EXPELLEE MONUMENTS AS REALMS OF MEMORY

While I primarily compare the sixty-one monuments erected in west Germany (Bavaria and Schleswig-Holstein) with the sixty-three erected in east Germany (Thuringia and Saxony) since the *Wende*, my investigation is additionally informed by an analysis of the 387 pre-*Wende* West German monuments which provides background in the way that memorialisation has developed over the years.¹ The majority of monuments are situated mostly in small to medium sized towns and villages reflecting where expellees resettled; cities were frequently too war-damaged to accommodate them. Many towns have several monuments, erected at various times and for different purposes.²

My discussion commences with a summary of my research analysis of locations, inscriptions and aesthetics of expellee monuments in east and West Germany. I then detail historical trends over time in West German memorialisation since 1945, followed by an examination of post-*Wende* east German memorialisation. I move on to consider some memorials in detail that reflect the expellee integration process, notably monuments in three cemeteries and an open green space, showing how expellees were initially discriminated against before becoming more accepted. I finally discuss how symbolism is used to reflect the loss of the *Heimat*, including the deployment of the female figure in expellee commemoration.

¹ I examine 511 monuments in total. For a full analysis refer to the tables of the location and main focus of the monuments in the appendices. Where a monument has several themes I have selected what appears to be the prime purpose. Data is drawn from the *Bund der Vertriebenen* website, 'In memoriam, Mahnmale und Gedenkstätten der Vertriebenen und Flüchtlinge in Deutschland und in ihren Herkunftsgebieten', <http://www.bund-der-vertriebenen.de/infopool/inmemoriam.php.3> [accessed 11 January 2008] and from field research.

² A summary of a diverse yet representative range of memorialisation in East and West German towns that I discuss in this chapter is in the appendices.

When discussing monuments the German language distinguishes between a *Denkmal* which invites viewers to ‘remember and reflect’ and a *Mahnmal* which ‘admonishes the viewer not to permit a repetition of the calamity’ that occurred.³ English has no such distinction and uses the words memorial and monument interchangeably, as I will. As James Young comments, the belief that memorials provide mourning places and recall deaths or sad events, and that monuments are celebratory, marking triumphs or heroes is erroneous. He argues that memorials can be celebratory; a memorial need not be a monument but a monument is always a sort of memorial.⁴

Martin Luther used the word monument for the first time in 1523 to denote the Latin ‘monumentum’ and Greek ‘mnemosynon’ in the sense of *Gedächtnishilfe* or *Gedächtnisstütze*,⁵ and indeed, a running theme in my analysis is the use of monuments to support memory. Expellee monuments reflect both the memories of their initiators and the cultural memory context of the time, in addition to the stance of the relevant local authority whose permission must be sought to erect them. Some 46.03% of east German memorials are located in cemeteries, similar to the proportion of 45.04% in the case of pre-1970 West German monuments, but the reason for this siting is different. West German expellees at this time used commemoration to publicly express their grief at the loss of lives during the expulsion, or the loss

³ Imort, Michael, ‘Stumbling Blocks: A Decentralized Memorial to Holocaust Victims’ in Monuments and Commemorative Sites for German Expellees’ in *Memorialization in Germany since 1945* ed. by Bill Niven and Chloe Paver (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 233-42 (p. 236).

⁴ Young, James E., *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 3-4.

⁵ Wijsenbeck, Dinah, *Denkmal und Gedenken: Über den kritischen Umgang mit der Vergangenheit auf dem Gebiet der bildenden Kunst* (Munich: Martin Meidenbauer, 2010), p. 23.

of the *Heimat*, in line with the contemporary cultural memory norms and cemetery locations were the most suitable for this purpose. East German memorialisation is taking place within a different political contextualisation than west Germany; local authorities, particularly in the early post-*Wende* years, comprised often the same political leaders as in the GDR and they frequently influenced the shape and location of monuments. Consequently these monuments are more understated in design and generally positioned in less public areas than west German memorials. It is as if once monuments were permitted they had to be hidden away, the post-*Wende* cultural memory in east Germany recognising the sensitivity attached to memorialising German victims. Indeed some memorials have been defaced. In the context of West German memorialisation up to the end of the 1960s expellees were generally acknowledged as victims by the majority of the population, although with changes in generations and to the cultural memory context monuments in West Germany too have been defaced, or subject to change.

The tendency in West Germany in the early postwar years towards use of religious symbolism and location in cemeteries has declined dramatically; just 19.67% of post-*Wende* west German monuments are situated in graveyards compared to 45.04% in the case of pre-1970 monuments. However, some early monuments were erected in quite prominent positions, such as the one on the promenade at Timmendorfer Strand, Schleswig-Holstein. Over time various monuments were relocated for practical reasons like town redevelopments but after the *Wende* a significant two-way change occurred. Some monuments in highly visible positions were relocated to out-of-the-way locations or even removed altogether, as their message was felt to be

outdated; and some memorials were erected in prominent locations as towns acknowledged the role expellees had played in their development like the five-metre-tall metal doorway-shaped memorial erected by the Bavarian government in Hallplatz, Nürnberg on 25 November 1999 as a central memorial to flight and expulsion. The latter trend is a sign of movement towards full assimilation of expellees, but it is also indicative of the fact that cultural memory has moved towards official recognition of Germans as victims since the mid-1990s.

Expellees were always free in West Germany to articulate their memories in collaboration with expellee clubs, framed by the cultural memory context of the time. Postwar, the *Heimat* concept was drawn on consistently and indeed increasingly by expellees to commemorate the loss of the *Heimat*. The theme of *Heimat* was employed in 30.85% of monuments up to 1969 and in 54.29%⁶ between 1970 and 1989. Inscriptions with a sentiment about *Heimat* still account for 50.82%⁷ of all post-*Wende* west German monuments compared to just 12.70% in east Germany. West German monuments have extensively incorporated symbols that represent the old *Heimat*: female figures, maps, bells, coats of arms, dialect in inscriptions, and motifs of the lost homeland. Additionally, expellee suffering is often presented pictorially, showing, for example, families on the treks westward. In comparison with East Germany, post-*Wende* west German memorialisation still focuses significantly on *Heimat*; mostly commemorating its loss, but also occasionally signifying thanks to the new *Heimat*. Alternatively sometimes a monument is used to thank the expellees for their role in constructing the new *Heimat*. East

⁶ 53.34% plus 0.95%.

⁷ 45.90% plus 4.92%.

German expellees on the other hand, were bound for forty years into a new socialist *Heimat* with no freedom to discuss the old one. When this restriction was suddenly released in 1990 expellees did not use the *Heimat* concept in the same way that West German expellees had done over a developing period of time. Although east German expellees feel a strong sense of *Heimat* loss, or at least my interlocutors do, this sentiment is not publicly expressed. East German monuments are generally aesthetically plain with relatively stark inscriptions and with few adornments or symbols that either allude to the old *Heimat* or portray expellee suffering.⁸ The absence of *Heimat* sentiment in inscriptions and dearth of *Heimat* symbolism in east German monuments indicates that the old *Heimat* is not publicly regarded in the same way as in west German commemoration. The forty years of suppression regarding the old *Heimat*, and the enforced focus on the new socialist *Heimat* has influenced the way the old homeland is remembered and reflected in commemoration. Unlike in West Germany the heritage of the old *Heimat* could not flourish in the GDR; there were no *Heimat* films or festivals or clubs associated with the old *Heimat*, no opportunity to perform a *Heimat* identity as there was in the West. The sharing of joint memories could not strengthen cultural identity and the effect of this is demonstrated in memorialisation. Although the taboo on the old *Heimat* is not perpetuated, monuments reflect the experience of socialisation in the GDR. Moreover, the word *Heimat*, when articulated in an expellee context, has over the years become associated with the implications and motivations of early West German memorialisation, namely revanchism, suggesting that its omission

⁸ Just four East German monuments feature coats of arms, in comparison to widespread use in West German memorialisation. Twelve deploy symbols, but often as a tiny addition to a plain monument, rather than using a symbol as a main feature as frequently the case in West Germany.

from east German memorialisation is a distancing strategy from such inferences.

In the main, east German memorials and their inscriptions focus predominantly and unspecifically on victims of wars and expulsion. Some 53.97% of east German monument dedications concentrate on a collective sense of victimhood, namely they have a broad focus on victims of war, expulsion and terror in general, albeit generally with the implication that victims are German. By contrast a mere 1.64% of post-*Wende* west German monuments have such an emphasis. Although pre-1970 West German memorialisation did indeed exhibit the purpose of mourning, inscriptions referred mostly to expellee victims (66.31%), rather than victims of war and terror as a whole (2.84%). East German memorialisation is taking place in a commemorative context which is moulded by the older and dominant West German commemorative framework, namely the antagonistic dichotomy between German victims and victims of German National Socialism. The lack of exclusive focus on expellee suffering indicates that forty years of silence has had an impact on current commemoration which has taken a different path to memorialisation than in contemporary west Germany. The west German context is marked by its own continuities, whereas in east Germany the tendency is to attempt to legitimise expellee suffering by contextualising it within the broader context of wartime suffering which may even include association with the suffering of the victims of the Nazis.

To introduce my discussion of expellee memorials I recap here the key arguments of my thesis. Building on the work of Halbwachs and Assmann I noted that individuals recall and rework their memories of past events in the

social context of the present time. Thus, the contemporary socio-political climate shapes and informs how individuals remember the past and consequently influences the form and timing of memorialisation. Specific socio-political factors include, for example, the changes in West German foreign policy from the mid-1960s and the widespread cultural impact of the televising of the American drama *Holocaust* in West Germany in 1979 with its focus on the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. Private, communicative memories are formed under the influence of cultural memory, the more formal 'official' and collective reflection on the past, mediated through the public sphere, exemplified by the mid-1980s *Historikerstreit*. As I noted, the two forms of memory can coincide, but they are not necessarily in agreement, as illustrated by the 1998 Walser-Bubis debate.

In the previous chapter I noted the waves of memorial erection and linked them to the cultural memory landscape. I now move on to discuss the form and function of memorialisation. In summary, the greatest number of monuments was erected in the years 1949 to 1956, a time when German suffering, including that of expellees, predominated in cultural memory. Expellee monuments reflected that suffering and also often portrayed revanchist sentiment in a socio-political context where the postwar borders had not been ratified in West Germany. From this point, other than at key anniversaries, fewer monuments were erected until the mid-1980s. During this phase *Ostpolitik* made border revision highly unlikely, official public memory focused on Germans as perpetrators, and the authorities were proclaiming successful expellee integration. Some expellee monuments did, however, clearly demonstrate the use of memorialisation as a way of bolstering the

cultural identity of expellees against the local population thus exemplifying *Heimat* as a core element of identity and illustrating that private experience did in some cases contradict official rhetoric. From the mid-1980s cultural memory discourse considered Germans as both victims and perpetrators, with a resurgence of interest in German suffering from the mid-1990s. Unification energised memorialisation and east German commemoration commenced from 1992. Accordingly, I argue that the pattern and style of expellee memorialisation is determined by the socio-political context and the following detailed discussion of memorials should be read within the framework of the previous chapter.

1. Pre-Wende West German Memorialisation

In this section I indicate four stages which are intended to broadly illustrate pre-Wende West German commemorative activity; however, they should not be read as phases of activity that are exclusively applicable to certain periods of time, although the specific historical context of the time of erection undoubtedly influenced the memorial process. For instance a monument type that is characteristic of the 1950s may also occur in the 1990s but would be influenced by the cultural memory of the later epoch. I discuss, therefore, monuments which illustrate broad trends: from 1947, mourning the *Heimat*; from the mid-1950s, replacing the *Heimat*; from the mid-1970s, reflecting on the *Heimat*; and from the mid-1980s, revering the *Heimat*. I contextualise each case study within the framework of the cultural memory landscape discussed in Chapter Two.

Contrary to the GDR, West German expellees were never constrained from commemoration, and they were assisted particularly from 1947 by the formation of expellee clubs which energised memorialisation. Although monuments were erected from 1947, a particularly intensive period of memorialisation occurred between 1949 and 1956. Often the earliest forms of monuments were plain wooden or stone crosses with simple inscriptions located in cemeteries. Cemetery locations fulfilled mourning functions, creating a place to grieve and to honour lost family members, at the same time equating them with the loss of the old *Heimat*. The dead were not necessarily recent losses but could also include ancestors from an earlier time, as the old cemeteries were now inaccessible. Elisabeth Fendl comments on the ‘Kein-Grab-Haben’ scenario played out by some expellees on *Allerseelen und Allerheiligen* whereby they decorated ‘fremde, verlassene Grabstellen’ as they possessed none of their own.⁹ In the early postwar period commemoration was undertaken as a way of putting down metaphorical markers, overcoming trauma and mourning the dead, acting almost as a spiritual conduit to the lost lands. Literal distance markers were also occasionally laid showing how many kilometres it was to the old *Heimat*.¹⁰ The stone cross and plinth which lies in Forchheim old cemetery, Bavaria, dates from 1951 (Figure 1). Coats of arms of the lost *Heimat* are displayed with a notation ‘Deutscher Osten, Sudetenland, Südosten’ and underneath is written ‘Der Heimat und ihren Toten’.

⁹ Fendl, p. 82.

¹⁰ See, for example, the monument by the *Pommernzentrum* at Travemünde.



Figure 1. Forchheim old Cemetery

The monument is inflected with revanchist sentiment through the prefix *Deutscher*, staking a political claim for ownership. The mourning function of monuments at this time did, in some cases, also have an irredentist purpose. The postwar border changes were not at this stage ratified, indeed were strongly opposed by all political parties, and as I noted in Chapter Two politicians and the general public, not just expellees, felt the territorial loss to be unjust.

The feeling for a *Heimat* is always stronger when it is forcibly removed and in the case of expellees who had suffered on the treks and experienced fraught conditions on arrival it is hardly surprising that the *Heimat* feeling was heightened. For those in camps and emergency accommodation the *Heimat* emotion fermented into a strange brew; *Heimat* identity was bolstered with a need to defend it against often hostile locals. Lehmann notes that at a time of great insecurity ‘absurde Ängste und Wünsche’ spread and led to a ‘nicht zu unterschätzende Wirkung’. He indicates the tales of angels, or the

Virgin Mary who had helped people on the flight and also those people who had ‘aggressive Wunschbilder und Rachegelüste’.¹¹ Certain individuals used the heightened sense of *Heimat* politically to agitate for the lands back and felt a great sense of injustice, harbouring ill feelings towards those who they saw as the expellers. In many cases it was a particular appeal to society for their voice to be heard. As Mittig and Plagemann comment, a *Denkmal* is ‘ein für die Dauer bestimmtes Werk, das an Personen oder Ereignisse erinnert und aus dieser Erinnerung einen Anspruch seiner Urheber, eine Lehre oder ein Appell an die Gesellschaft ableiten und historisch begründen soll’.¹²

Use of religious symbolism was a feature of early postwar expellee memorialisation. Before 1970, 139 monuments (Bavaria 126, Schleswig-Holstein 13) incorporated a Christian cross or a religious symbol in their design or a religious reference in an inscription. This tendency declined to 14 monuments, all Bavarian, between 1970 and 1989, and is a characteristic observable post-*Wende* in just 4 monuments.¹³ Koshar notes that the use of a crucifix and the Pieta in war memorials equated the war dead and Christ’s suffering, and also that Christianity and Christian iconography had a strong national function in West Germany of the 1950s.¹⁴ The use of religious symbolism in early expellee monuments suggests a similar comparison between the suffering of Christ and expellees’ own suffering, as well as lending spiritual comfort. In some places quite elaborate edifices were constructed with a combination of cross and memorial stones, often resembling tombstones, such as the similar structures in the adjacent Catholic

¹¹ Lehmann, p. 18.

¹² Jochmann, p. 13.

¹³ My analysis comprises 448 monuments for my chosen West German states. Nine post-*Wende* east German monuments use religious symbolism out of 63 in total.

¹⁴ Koshar, p. 223.

and Protestant graveyards at Regensburg, Bavaria, both erected in 1949 (Figures 2 and 3).¹⁵



Figure 2. Protestant Cemetery



Figure 3. Catholic Cemetery

Although Regensburg's early postwar population consisted of 83.9% Catholics and 12.9% Protestants,¹⁶ the almost identical monuments suggest a

¹⁵ Regensburg's population of 123,357 on 15 November 1946 consisted of 27,678 *Zugewanderte*, namely 22.4%. StA Regensburg: Amtliches Zahlenmaterial zum Flüchtlingsproblem in Bayern. Dritte Folgen. Im Auftrag des Staatssekretärs Wolfgang Jaenicke (Munich, May 1947), p. 10.

need to acknowledge a distinctive religious identity, while being similar in form to recognise comparable suffering and emphasise shared values.

As noted in Chapter Two, expellee suffering mirrored the victim mentality of the nation at this time. A memorial that exemplifies this victimhood is the wooden cross and plinth that lies on a memory trail, the Rosenberg *Spurenweg* in the woods behind the imposing fortress at Kronach, Bavaria (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Kronach, *Spurenweg*

The monument, according to the BdV website, was erected in 1954 by expellees from the Sudetenland and linked regional events in 1919 to the expulsion, stressing the victim experience of the expellees on three plaques. ‘Den Toten der Heimat’ stood centrally with ‘4. März 1919, 54 Sudetendeutsche von Tschechen erschossen’ to the left and ‘1945/46, 241000

¹⁶ Heigl, Peter, *Die Integration der Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen in der Stadt Regensburg 1945 bis 1949: Eine stadtgeschichtliche Untersuchung gefördert durch Mittel des Neumüller-Stipendium der Stadt Regensburg* (Regensburg: 1987), p. 232.

sudetendeutsche Vertreibungsoffer' to the right.¹⁷ It is unusual to see a combination of specific and historical context for the expulsions, although typically this particular framework did not exhibit any signs of German culpability. On the contrary it linked distinct historical events in which Sudeten Germans were victims of Czechs. Interestingly, in 2010 the wording has changed from that on the BdV website. The left plaque now reads: '4. März 1919, 161 Tote und Verletzte, Verweigerung des Selbstbestimmungsrechts', the middle one 'Den Toten und Entrechteten der Heimat. Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft' together with a coat of arms, and the right one '1945/46. 3,5 Mill. Vertriebene, Über 250000 Opfer'.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the thrust of the theme remains the same, or if anything the 'expellees as victims' tone is enhanced with increased victim numbers in evidence. People were injured or killed; their self-determination rights and their *Heimat* were taken away from them. Expellees are presented as passive victims who had played no part in the process; however, the reference to the perpetrators has been removed, in a sign of possible reconciliation with the Czech Republic. Although it is unclear when the plaque was reworded the updated wording reflects the context of a changing memory discourse, although it still retains a sharp sense of injustice.

From the mid-1950s expellee organisations became increasingly active in initiating memorialisation and local clubs erected monuments that displayed their origins and emotions. The 1956 stone monument on Hindenburg-Promenade at Haßfurt, Bavaria, for example, displays a carved

¹⁷ I quote in all cases the precise punctuation and wording displayed on the monuments.

¹⁸ In 1951 a plaque and 'Sudetendeutsches Kreuz' was erected in Landshut's 'städtischem Friedhof' in memory of the dead of the Sudetenland and expellees meet here every 4 March to commemorate the victims. Interview, Horst Osthoff.

map of the Sudetenland with a cross within it and an inscription: 'Unsere 600000 Toten rufen!'. This appears as a call for action to regain the lost territories as well as a cry for help in the spiritual sense, that their experiences and identity should not be forgotten. In a study of expellee monuments Jeffrey Luppès divides memorialisation into two types: firstly he designates monuments in pursuit of 'concrete politics', those whose initiators wanted the lands back, compensation, and official political and cultural recognition. The second types strive for 'symbolic politics'; desiring 'societal acknowledgement of the collectively innocent suffering of the expellees'. He concludes by summarising: 'what was commemorative in tone was without question political in intent'.¹⁹ Detailed though Luppès's study is, through his focus on politics he neglects the personal element of commemorative activity, which is also important. Losing relatives or friends is a cause for grief and thus an additional focus for the monuments. The forcible loss of the old *Heimat* affected expellees' sense of identity and they sought to see this acknowledged in the form of monuments; thus the personal and political intersect and coincide in inscriptions and design of monuments.

Around ten years after the expulsions the first intense wave of memorialisation that concentrated on mourning subsided somewhat and the nevertheless sustained activity took on, in some places, a different form. One characteristic of the socio-political climate of the 1950s and 1960s was the public announcements of West German success stories regarding expellee integration.²⁰ Memorials reflected the complexity of that assimilation process. Monuments were erected at this time as a way of preserving the old culture in

¹⁹ Luppès, p. 331-34.

²⁰ Ther, p. 328.

the new society, demonstrating a sense of self-worth and also as a means of asserting a cultural identity against the usually dominant local culture.²¹ While individuals naturally differed in their behaviour, for some expellees memorialisation was an aid to integration, making their new *Heimat* bearable in the short term while still keeping alive the hopes of return. Later as return became ever more unlikely, they preserved their cultural identity as roots, while they also adopted a second *Heimat*, thereby inculcating parallel *Heimaten*. For others memorialisation was always a temporary necessity, a way of holding on to cultural identity until the return to the *Heimat*. Some people felt strongly that they needed to carry an awareness of the old *Heimat* in the new one, not just by displaying their souvenirs that they brought with them, but by, for instance, inaugurating a *Patenschaft*, which often possessed characteristics so close to the old *Heimat* that it became a substitute *Heimat*. They also regularly attended expellee club meetings or erected monuments as a visible sign of their past. Many expellees supported the *Patenschaft* town over many years, and indeed still do, cultivating it as one might nurture a garden and visiting when it became possible to do so.

The intricately engraved *Pommernstein* at Eckernförde, Schleswig-Holstein (Figure 5) reflects the founding of a *Patenschaft*, erected in 1961 at a quiet intersection between the waterfront and a housing estate, where seven refugee camps stood at one time nearby.²² Its inscription reads: ‘Patenschaft des Kreises Eckernförde für den Kreis Köslin-Bublitz. Der pommerschen

²¹ Gehrmann, pp. 162-64.

²² From the map in the *Heimatmuseum* Eckernförde. In 1950 85% of all refugees in the Eckernförde district still lived in emergency accommodation such as barracks or as lodgers. Heyer, Angelika, *Aufnahme und Eingliederung der Heimatvertriebenen und Flüchtlinge im ehemaligen Kreis Eckernförde* (Kiel: Christian-Albrechts-Universität, 1987), p. 175. The population of the former district Eckernförde grew from 48,387 on 7 February 1944 to 93,034 by 27 May 1946. Wicke, p. 9.

in Flensburg wrote to Mölln, asking for the same recognition for Gollnow as Massow, which he hoped would reduce the homesickness being suffered by expellees.²⁵ In a further letter to the mayor on 28 March 1963 the author begged in emotive language for Gollnow to become a *Patenschaft* like Massow; the club did not want material help, simply support to get their *Heimat* back, although the help was unspecified in nature.²⁶ The forming of such ties and the establishment of monuments appeared to provide tangible solace; the desperation which the author conveys in his writing refers to a representative *Heimat* through a *Patenschaft*, as well as a territorial claim. The stones appear as a sort of transplanted *Heimat* accessible in the new one, or even a kind of transubstantiation. Symbolically the monuments ‘fix’ the old *Heimat* in the new *Heimat*, enabling a sense of overlay for the expellee generation and the generations that follow, providing a sense of continuity with the old culture, traditions and customs, and even adding a measure of hope that the old *Heimat* will one day be restored to them.

With the passage of time a trend developed whereby monuments tended to become less literal and unadorned and instead became more emblematic. It is as if once the initial trauma had passed, it became acceptable, or perhaps necessary, for images to be used to help communicate the loss. The 1976 three-cubed, tall stone monument at Forchheim, Bavaria, commemorates its *Patenschaft* with Braunau (Figure 6) and exhibits a fusion of emptiness and imagery.²⁷ Erected initially in a prominent location by the railway station, the memorial was moved in 2002 to the Streckerplatz, a quiet square in the town centre, as the old site was redeveloped for a new bus station.

²⁵ StA Mölln, Heimatbund der Massower und Umgebung, III 1957-1973.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The town has also a Braunauer *Heimatstube*.



Figure 6. Forchheim

The monument refers to the ‘Unvergessene Heimat’ as well as displaying four engravings on each side of the middle cube, one of which has a mother and child design. Another side shows two men, one chained to the other; the next two women, one offering the other sustenance and the last depicts a nun helping a prone figure. Suffering and support, as well as a sense of loss appear to be the key messages.

As more elaborate memorials were developed to honour the *Heimat* they were located often in settings that permitted groups to socialise and bolster collective identity. Even the simplest monument has frequently a bench placed alongside, seemingly to encourage its observers to sit and reflect on the past. Monuments are commonly unveiled on special days like *Volkstrauertag*

in November, and especially on significant occasions groups of expellees gather to lay wreaths in memory of their loss. As Aleida Assmann notes, memory is supported not just by material representations like monuments but also by symbolic practices like rituals, special days and anniversaries.²⁸ The monument as *Erinnerungsfigur* is assisted by regular, institutionalised ceremonies of wreath-laying which aid the memory preserving process, the rhythmic occurrences a little like memorising by rote.

In 1977 a memorial site was constructed at Fockbek, near Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein in an arena-like fashion, bearing the characteristics of an ancient stone circle (Figure 7). The memorial lies in a fairly remote rural area, off a country lane. To reach it one walks down a footpath, which has an erratic boulder at its entrance, pointing the way to the site, which at that point lies hidden from view within woodland. The memorial consists of a central large erratic boulder standing on a raised grassy mound, surrounded by shrubbery and stones that bear the names of the lost lands including Saxony and Thuringia in the GDR, as is often the case in monuments from this period. Rows of wooden benches surround the memorial, indicating the growing use of monuments as cultural and social locations. Monuments help expellees to preserve a sense of collective identity and community but also in a sense amplify the loss, as the expellees group together to celebrate, or even worship the past around a shrine. In the elaborate nature of the symbolism and by imitating the pattern of an ancient stone circle the memorial's design hints at continuity and antiquity.

²⁸ Assmann, *Der lange Schatten*, p. 32.



Figure 7. Rendsburg Fockbek

The secluded woodland setting adds to the quasi-mystical aura of the site and enhances the notion of ritualised tradition. By commemorating in this way, expellees are simultaneously celebrating their long-standing culture and cementing group cohesion.

At a time when official memory rhetoric was polarised between right and left political stances on commemoration of victims of National Socialism, as outlined in Chapter Two, expellee commemoration continued unabated, indeed memorialisation increased between 1985 and 1988. The old *Heimat* had, in many cases, not reduced in significance, but rather became revered. Through constant retelling of stories of life as it used to be, the *Heimat* came to be mythologized.²⁹ Commemoration coincided with the fortieth anniversary of the end of World War Two and the expulsions, as well as being the height of the *Historikerstreit*, part of which debate concerned comparisons between

²⁹ Großbongardt and Pötzl, p. 45.

expellee and Jewish suffering as discussed in Chapter Two. In this context the *Salett* in the former *Mühlengarten* by the *Hl. Geistbrücke* of the river Isar in Landshut town centre was judged to be a worthy memorial site by local government officials in 1986.³⁰ Erected by the local *Landsmannschaften* with the involvement of town and district local councils,³¹ the ‘Kapellenartiger Bau mit Bronzetafeln im Innern’ represents expellees clearly as victims (Figures 8 and 9).³²

The monument’s central location and chapel construction shows the reverence and importance accorded to the commemoration. Part of the inscription reads:

1939 lebten 18,7 Mill. Deutsche in den Vertreibungsgebieten. 1944-1945-1946 und später wurden sie vertrieben, verschleppt, ermordet oder sind verschollen. 12 Millionen erreichten den Rest des geschlossenen deutschen Volksbodens. Sie kamen aus diesen ihren Heimatländern – und Landschaften.

The strongly worded and ambiguous inscription includes the term *Volksboden* that powerfully suggests nationalism, an association with the *Blut und Boden* ideology of the Nazis, and illustrates the problematic correlation between *Heimat* ideology and that of National Socialism. It also plays on figures to presumably gain effect. The inscription appears to suggest 18.7 million expellees yet later it claims that twelve million of these reached German soil, the implication being that 6.7 million people died or disappeared. The *Bundesarchiv* figure attributable to those who died or remained unaccounted for, is around 2.8 million.³³

³⁰ StA Landshut, *Landshuter Zeitung*, 28 March 1986, p. 17.

³¹ Spitzlberger, Georg, *Die Kriegerdenkmäler in Stadt und Landkreis Landshut* (Landshut: Kneidl und Pfaffinger, 2000), p. 86.

³² Landshut had 31,930 locals and 14,084 *Zugewanderte*, namely 30.6% on 15 November 1946. StA Regensburg: Amtliches Zahlenmaterial, p. 10.

³³ Kossert, p. 41.

Figure 8. Landshut *Kapelle* outsideFigure 9. Landshut *Kapelle* inside

While some ethnic Germans did occasionally remain in the regions, either rarely by choice or more usually being compelled to stay and act as forced labour for the new regime, this would not account for 6.7 million people.³⁴ The figure is uncomfortably close to the six million figure often used for Jewish victims, thus covertly implying comparative suffering. Ten years later, in 1995 in a socio-political context in which the unified Germany was debating how to deal with the Nazi past, Rolf Fahle, an individual referred to as a ‘political agitator’ by the *Landshuter Zeitung* attempted to get the wording changed on the monument, which unleashed strong protest from expellee clubs and the *Junge Union*.³⁵ Calling the current wording ‘politisch untragbar’ Fahle staged an initiative to amend the inscription that made clear the Nazi regime was supported by the majority of the population, and set out details of over 30 million people who were expelled by that regime as well as

³⁴ Many Transylvanian Saxons in Romania were forced to work for the new regime. Interview Martin Hanek.

³⁵ ‘Alternative zu den Tafeln an der Heilig-Geist-Brücke wird vorgestellt’, *Landshuter Zeitung*, 21 June 1995.

more than 36 million who died during the Third Reich. The wording has not been amended yet Fahle is not the only one to be aggrieved about the monument, as it has been defaced several times.³⁶

In a seemingly more literal construction of *Heimat* loss, stressing the loss of territory, a large *Kreiskarte* of the Falkenau a.d. Eger region was erected in a suburb of Schwandorf, Bavaria in 1989 (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Schwandorf Falkenau *Kreiskarte*

The region is now part of the Czech Republic and the map displays German towns with their original names. It also lists some towns which the Czechs destroyed after 1945. Over forty years after the expulsions there are still indications of an unwillingness to accept the boundary changes, and the stark words exhibit no sign of conciliation with neighbouring lands: ‘Die mit + bezeichneten Orte wurden nach 1945 von den Tschechen zerstört’. In this

³⁶ Interview, Osthoff.

account Czechs acted in isolation and Germans played no part in the history before the destruction.

2. Post-Wende: Changing Sites of West German Memory

In this section I discuss memorials erected in west Germany after the *Wende*, or monuments that were erected before the *Wende* but have been subject to change. In each case I link the memorial to the cultural memory landscape of the time of erection or alteration.

The *Wende* and formal ratification of the post-1945 borders in 1991 marked a caesura. The BdV voted against acceptance and certain *Landsmannschaften* were still agitating against the situation.³⁷ One might at this point expect memorialisation to diminish but monuments continue to be erected with respect to events during the Nazi regime and its aftermath, as if given new impetus in response to the unification of Germany, but also around the fiftieth anniversary point of the end of the war and the expulsions. For example, in Regensburg in 1995 three new plaques were unveiled: one to Elly Maldaque, a teacher and communist persecuted in the Third Reich; one to Oskar Schindler who saved the lives of over 1,200 Jews and who lived in the town from November 1945 to June 1950 and one to expellees processed through the refugee reception camp *Klarenangerschule*, ‘die selbst Opfer dieses Unrechts- und Kriegsregimes des eigenen Staates wurden’.³⁸ This phraseology construes expellees as victims of the Nazis, a way of seeming to avoid criticism of eastern European neighbours but it is a dubious

³⁷ Ahonen, p. 263.

³⁸ ‘Aus Beschlüssen wurden Tafeln: Dreimal Erinnerung: Drei neue Gedenktafel in 1995’, *Die Woche*, 23 November 1995, p. 11.

appropriation of a position of victimhood. Friedrich Kaunzner, chairperson of the local BdV thanked the mayor at the unveiling ceremony:

Trotz der Häme und des zynischen Kommentars einer Wochenzeitung haben Sie unbeirrt daran festgehalten, das Unrecht der Vertreibung an diesem Ort, den viele von uns vor 50 Jahren als Durchgangslager erlebt haben, durch eine Gedenktafel zu bringen.³⁹

Obviously not all local people were happy about the latter commemoration. Although discussion of expellee suffering was now becoming more prevalent as German guilt had been more widely acknowledged, the topic of German victimhood, with Germans construed as victims of the Nazis, just like Jewish victims, was still regarded more widely as unacceptable without sufficient contextualisation.

Notwithstanding some new commemoration, some earlier monuments have been subject to change, with a trend of monument relocation to less prominent positions. Indeed, some have been removed, like the memorial at Satrup, Schleswig-Holstein. Engraved originally 'Fern doch treu. Oder/Neisse 1945 -' a seemingly hopeful revisionist pretence that the borders were only temporary, it was taken away in 1991 in the wake of unification and in final acceptance of the Oder-Neisse line as a permanent German border.

From 1956 an expellee monument stood in a prominent position by the imposing Maritim Hotel on the promenade at Timmendorfer Strand, Schleswig-Holstein. It consisted of large coats of arms of the lost areas, together with a map of the old territories, including those lost after World War One, in a conflation of historical events, perhaps to strengthen the nationalist sentiment and sense of injustice. The inscription, at the side of a cross, read:

³⁹ *Historische Festschrift 1945-1995 50 Jahre Flucht, Deportation, Vertreibung Unrecht bleibt Unrecht. Dokumentation zum Tag der Heimat am 7. Oktober und zur Enthüllung der Gedenktafel am 20. Dezember 1995*, p. 15.

‘Den Toten zum Gedenken. Den Lebenden zur Mahnung’. Presumably in an effort to downplay the outdated significance, particularly due to its position by the side of one of the sophisticated resort’s major hotels, where it might have had a detrimental effect on tourism, the authorities decided to relocate the monument in 1998 to a nearby wood by an evangelical church, the *Waldkapelle*. Surrounded by bathing beaches and *Strandkörbe* it certainly would have seemed out of place on the promenade many years after the expulsion. The monument was absorbed into the 1914-18 war memorial and remodelled into an all-encompassing victims’ memorial, albeit with reference only to all German victims, thereby diluting the expellees’ commemoration and displaying features in a style reminiscent of an east German memorial. Coats of arms and a map of the lost territories are displayed (Figure 11).

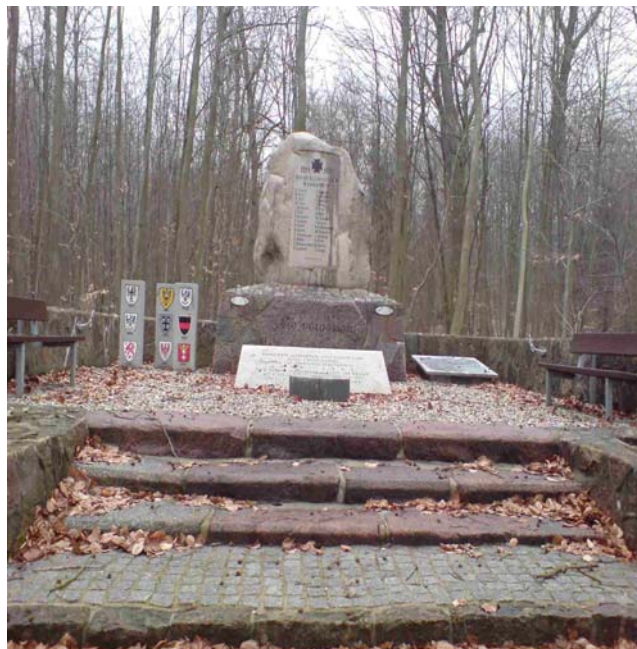


Figure 11. Timmendorfer Strand

Underneath the World War One list of fallen soldiers is written ‘Nie Vergessen!’ and on an additional sloping stone block a new inscription reads: ‘Unseren geliebten Angehörigen zum Gedächtnis die im zweiten Weltkrieg ihr Leben gelassen haben im Felde in der Heimat auf der Flucht und in der Gefangenschaft’.⁴⁰ It is unclear whether the ‘Nie Vergessen!’ refers to just the World War One soldiers or the broad-spectrum victims of the whole memorial.

Wulf Hönicke, expelled from Prenzlau, remembers taking part as a schoolboy in the original unveiling ceremony. Now he is campaigning for the monument to be returned to a more prominent public location as part of the town centre redevelopment: ‘Ein Denkmal soll, wie der Name ja sagt, zum Denken anregen. Folglich sollte es nicht irgendwo versteckt werden’.⁴¹ In Joachim Zeller’s study of colonial monuments he notes the significance of monument location, regarding it as just as important as the form and dedication.⁴² Centrally located monuments are perceived to have a higher standing than those in outlying areas. Hönicke is indeed correct that this new tucked-away location will not attract much attention, of course this being probably the intention of the authorities.

The tendency to commemorate several types of victims together can be also seen in Ingolstadt, Bavaria, where a large commemorative site was unveiled in 1999 in Luitpold Park, a space where two expellee monuments had stood for decades (Figure 12).⁴³ A commemorative stone (weighing 60

⁴⁰ Written in capitals without punctuation.

⁴¹ StA Timmendorfer Strand, *Lübecker Nachrichten*, 3 December 2009.

⁴² Zeller, Joachim, *Kolonialdenkmäler und Geschichtsbewußtsein: Eine Untersuchung der kolonialdeutschen Erinnerungskultur* (Frankfurt am Main: IKO, 1999), p. 24.

⁴³ Ingolstadt’s population of 44,155 on 15 November 1946 included 12,542 *Zugewanderte*, namely 28.4%. StA Regensburg: Amtliches Zahlenmaterial, p. 10.

centners from a Jura marble block, visible in the middle of the photograph) inscribed 'Den Toten des deutschen Ostens 1945' and engraved with figures from a trek 'das Bildmotiv von einer Briefmarke zu Geschehen der Vertreibung' was erected here on 15 September 1968 at a cost of 6,600 deutschmarks.



Figure 12. Ingolstadt Luitpold Park

Sculptor Konrad Barthelmess reduced the price as his contribution and the town donated 1,000 deutschmarks. On 30 July 1978 a commemorative stone of the *Niemser Heimatgruppe* was erected alongside, on the thirtieth anniversary of the *Niemes Patenschaft Heimattreffen*. Shaped by sculptor Curt Wohler, the stone's inscription reads 'Die Lebenden der Toten unserer Heimat. Kreis Niemes Sudetenland'. It was financed from expellee contributions and a donation from the Ingolstadt *Patenschaft*.⁴⁴ At this stage both stones (Figures 13 and 14) were placed in a vertical position by the war

⁴⁴ Dittmar, Christian, 'Geschichte der alten Denkmalsteile im neuen Mahnmahl im Luitpoldpark' in *Mahnmal, Erinnerungsorte, Museum: Die Realisierung: Dokumentation zum Denkmal von Dagmar Pachtner. Ingolstadt 1998/9* ed. by Initiative für Mahn- und Gedenkstätten in Ingolstadt (Ingolstadt: 1999), pp. 79-87 (pp. 86-87).

memorial that had been located in the park since 1966 and which acted as the central memorial site for *Volkstrauertag*. In 1995 an initiative was set up in Ingolstadt to create a memorial site for victims of National Socialism, contemporaneous with national debates regarding the intended Holocaust memorial, exemplifying Germany's public culture of contrition.



Figure 13. Niemes memorial



Figure 14. 'Den Toten des Ostens'

Following a colloquium and competition it was decided to create a central *Ort des Erinnerns, Gedenkens und Mahnens* in Luitpold Park where victims would not stand in a hierarchy but would be given back their dignity in the eyes of the living, 'soweit das überhaupt möglich ist'.⁴⁵ The *Mahnmal* was officially dedicated on 26 April 1999, the anniversary of the freeing of Ingolstadt by the American army. In addition to the existing monuments, new ones were installed to victims of wars and National Socialism, such as Jews, and those who resisted the regime. As part of this installation the artist Dagmar Pachtner decided to alter the angle of the expellee monuments: 'Sie

⁴⁵ Tietmann, Lutz, 'Zur Denkmalsituation in Ingolstadt' in *Gedenken und Erinnern: Dokumentation zum Kolloquium Mahn- und Gedenkstätten in Ingolstadt vom 15. und 16. November 1996: Material zum Ideenwettbewerb für Künstlerinnen und Künstler* ed. by Initiative für Mahn- und Gedenkstätten in Ingolstadt (Ingolstadt: 1997), pp. 12-15 (p.15).

werden jeweils auf zwei keilförmigen Riegeln schräg liegend angeordnet'.⁴⁶ It is unclear why, and in the event one of the monuments is laid almost horizontal, whereas the other remains as it was. Maybe this is indeed hierarchisation, whereby German victims who were also perpetrators do not feature so prominently as Jews or resisters whose lives are commemorated by large blue stelae.

Monuments are often initiated in an attempt to preserve history in a context of an ever-changing present. All initiators hope that their message will continue but regimes change and monuments decay.⁴⁷ What once was West Germany's largest expellee monument, unveiled at Oberschleißheim, Bavaria on 19 July 1984 in the presence of Minister-President Franz Josef Strauß, has been remodelled twice and its changes reflect the cultural memory context of the times. The memorial originally consisted of one of the last preserved boats that carried refugees across the Baltic Sea, 'Pionierlandungsboot vom Typ 41', a memory wall with plaques and glass containers of *Heimat* earth as well as a bell tower with two bells dating from 1622 und 1652 from the church in Kiwitten in Ermland. In addition to commemorating the victims of the expulsion, mention is made of *Wehrmacht* soldiers who helped in the evacuation, in wording analogous to that used by Hillgruber in the *Historikerstreit*: 'Soldaten der 24. Panzerdivision - vormals 1. Ostpreußische Kavalleriedivision - kämpften bis zum Untergang für ihre Heimat und für die Rettung von Flüchtlingen aus Ostpreußen'. In June 1995 a memorial site for

⁴⁶ *Mahnmal, Erinnerungsorte, Museum*, pp. 18-23. The artist furthermore signposts the observer to visit the town museum where a section is devoted to the Luitpold Park *Mahnmal* with replica stelae. Information on each victim is laid out in a book below the person's photograph; often books contain very little material, a sign of the person's short life.

⁴⁷ For example, a monument commemorating the Red Army in Dresden was moved after the *Wende* away from its prominent location in Dresden Neustadt; only a small plaque remains in its previous position.

fallen soldiers of East and West Prussia was incorporated into the site, unveiled by the politician Edmund Stoiber. The ‘Bund der Antifaschisten und das Münchner Bündnis gegen Rassismus’ protested at the event against the memorial naming it ‘Nazi-Wehrmachtskult unter der Schirmherrschaft der Bayerischen Staatsregierung’.⁴⁸ As noted in Chapter Two, the *Wehrmacht* exhibition that commenced in 1995 was bringing to a wider public the research into the role of the *Wehrmacht* in the war and engendered massive debate. What was apparently acceptable at this site in the socio-political climate of 1984 was no longer so appropriate in 1995.

In the last few years negotiations between the *Landkreis München* and the East and West Prussian expellee club and museum on the site, about what form the new memorial would take, have been lengthy and tense.⁴⁹ The protracted discussions left the memorial in 2010 a much-reduced version of its earlier self (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Oberschleißheim, 2010

⁴⁸ Bachhuber, Klaus, ‘Tumulte bei Weihe von Kriegdenkmal: Bündnis gegen Rassismus: “Revanchisten-Treffen”’, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 26 June 1995.

⁴⁹ Expellee club files.

Part of the memorial had been removed and what remained had been conquered by nature and the ship had tape around it with a 'Kein Zutritt' notice, a not particularly welcoming sign for a memorial.

In June 2011 the two bells have been rehung under a wooden cupola, the boat has been renovated and the *Heimaterde* will be retained in around 77 containers set into the ground. Important elements for expellees have thus been integrated into the new construction, justified in terms which allude to a contemporary discourse of human rights:

Das Pionierlandungsboot transportiert die Themen Krieg, Flucht, Fluchthilfe und Leiden der Zivilbevölkerung und mahnt zu Gewaltverzicht. Die Heimaterde erinnert an Heimat, Heimatverlust, neue Heimat, Bevölkerungsverschiebung und Migrationsbewegungen. An die Glocken im Denkmalsbereich knüpfen die Themen Glaube, Religion und kulturelles Erbe an.⁵⁰

A community centre for young people now stands alongside the commemorative site, and in line with cultural memory norms the whole location is now intended to be future focused, used for 'die Mahnung zu Frieden, Verständigung und Dialog zwischen den Menschen und Nationen'.⁵¹

Political contention also concerned the expellee monument at Hain *Schillerwiese* Bamberg, Bavaria, and this example demonstrates that expellees too have conflicting opinions. A foundation stone for a memorial was laid on 5 August 1950, planning permission was finally granted on 15 July 1958 and the monument was ultimately erected on 12 September 1965 as a large stone with two adjacent pillars (Figure 16).⁵²

⁵⁰ *Anlage Dr. Schoßig, Abschlußbericht d. Kommission zur Gestaltung des Denkmalsbereichs auf dem Gelände des JBS OSH*, expellee club archive.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² StA Bamberg, Registraturakte. Akte der Stadt Bamberg. Errichtung eines Mahnmales der Heimatvertriebenen in Hain (Schillerwiese). 1958. Beiakt z. Akt. Tit. VI m. Fach Nr. 655. Akten Nr. 2.



Figure 16. Bamberg Hain *Schillerwiese*

The simple inscription reads: ‘Der Heimat treu. Die Heimatvertriebenen’. On 17 June 1999 the monument was defaced by an unknown paint-sprayer with the words ‘Deutsche Täter sind keine Opfer’.⁵³ Perhaps as a result, on 14 September 2003 town councillor Norbert Tscherner of the BBB (*Bamberger-Bürger-Block*), himself an expellee, donated a bronze plaque which was screwed onto the monument. Headed ‘Heimat im vereinten Europa!’ it concludes ‘Erst, wenn überall in dieser europäischen Heimat Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit und Solidarität garantiert sind, kann sich der Mensch dort wirklich zu Hause fühlen’. The chairperson of the local expellee club objected strongly to the interference with the original and appealed to the mayor for its removal, together with the Bamberg coat of arms which had also appeared.⁵⁴ A media report of 7 November 2003 notes the removal in an article headed ‘Tscherner-Tafel mit niemandem abgesprochen’ with reference to it being

⁵³ StA Bamberg, *Fränkischer Tag*. Nr. 136, 17 June 1999, p. 14.

⁵⁴ StA Bamberg, Registraturakte.

‘ein politisches Spiel’.⁵⁵ This is a noteworthy case of a continually developing monument around which contested memories circulated that are subject to ongoing and changing political circumstances. Hence, a long-standing monument is marked by refreshed sentiment applicable to changing socio-political contexts.

A compromise solution was found to a disputed memorial in Mölln, Schleswig-Holstein when competing memories between the authorities and expellees arose post-*Wende*. A large map of the lost *Heimat* with 1937 boundaries and coats of arms had been displayed in the new *Stadthaus* since 1987. Its inscription read: ‘Das gesamte deutsche Volk bleibt aufgefordert, in freier Selbstbestimmung die Einheit und Freiheit Deutschlands zu vollenden. Präambel des Grundgesetzes der Bundesrepublik Deutschland’. Following unification the map and wording was removed, which unleashed an outpouring of objections by expellees. Expellees claimed that their memories had been unfairly disregarded. Chairperson Karl Kannieß from the local BdV club said that not only had the plaque been largely financed by expellee contributions, it ‘sollte den Flüchtlingen und Vertriebenen, die aus diesen Gebieten nach Mölln kamen, zur ständigen Erinnerung an ihre Heimat dienen’.⁵⁶ Following a battle lasting several weeks the map returned, accompanied by two new commentaries, making it clear that the post-1945 borders had been politically ratified (Figure 17).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ ‘Entrüstung bei Vertriebenen. Möllner Ortsverband fordert: Wappentafel im Stadthaus wieder anbringen’, *Lübecker Nachrichten*, 28 November 1990.



Figure 17. Mölln *Stadthaus*

Firstly the ‘Präambel des Grundgesetzes der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in der Fassung vom 3. Oktober 1990’ is set out, showing that the Germans of all federal states ‘haben in freier Selbstbestimmung die Einheit und Freiheit Deutschlands vollendet. Damit gilt dieses Grundgesetz für das gesamte deutsche Volk’. Secondly, an extract from Article Two of the German-Polish treaty of 17 October 1991 appears: ‘Die Vertragsparteien erklären, dass die zwischen ihnen bestehende Grenze jetzt und in Zukunft unverletztlich ist und verpflichten sich gegenseitig zur uneingeschränkten Achtung ihrer Souveränität und territorialen Integrität’. In a discussion of a similar example at Tornesch, Hans Hesse and Elke Purpus believe that such compromises fudge the issue and it is better to remove memorials of this sort altogether.⁵⁷ In my view, however, the memorial as it now stands can in no way be considered revanchist; it acknowledges expellees’ memories and portrays the

⁵⁷ Hesse and Purpus, pp. 54-55.

shifts in memory culture, displaying layers of revanchist feeling just under the surface but made acceptable by the explanatory additional text. Just like the 1952 plaque on the Nassauer Haus in Nürnberg that commemorates the not yet returned prisoners of war, it is a trace of history that reflects memory of one moment in time. With its layers of overwritten contextualisation, the Mölln memorial demonstrates the contested, contingent nature of expellee memorialisation.

This section has demonstrated that although inaugurated at a certain point in time in an attempt to present and communicate one version of the past, some monuments and their messages have not remained static but have been caught up in memory battles of the present. They now actually impart a somewhat different meaning to that which was initially intended as the relevance is digested into a different political context. They sometimes reveal, like palimpsests, layers of different, competing and contested positions which cannot quite be hidden under new inscriptions or in new locations.

3. Post-Wende: The Lost *Heimat* in East German Commemoration

Following the *Wende* expellee clubs were speedily founded in east Germany; five east German *Landesverbände* were formed between November 1990 and June 1991. They were admitted to the BdV on 29 June 1991 and moved to initiate public commemoration straight away.⁵⁸ As I indicated in the introduction to this chapter, scrutiny of the expellee monuments in east Germany indicates that the old *Heimat* has mostly been erased from memories in the public realm. Just 12.70% of east German monument inscriptions

⁵⁸ Interview, Norbert Schütz.

incorporate a *Heimat* theme against 50.82% of those erected at a comparable time in west Germany. One might assume that this was due to a softening of the feeling of loss over the course of time, but on the contrary my interlocutors in east Germany articulate a great sense of loss for their old homeland. The answer lies more in the functioning of cultural memory, and the political context in which the belated commemoration is taking place.

East German monuments are often placed off the beaten track or in cemeteries, particularly in Thuringia, although there are regional differences. Several Saxon monuments are placed in areas of former refugee camps, or at significant borders with the old *Heimat*. However, a shared overall characteristic is a tendency for east German monuments to be erected in locations that are not regarded as prime positions.

The history behind the Jena expellee monument illustrates the tensions involved in expellee memorialisation. Following the founding of the club in 1990 expellees finally acquired sufficient funding to erect a monument in 1995. On 3 November of that year Herr Mehr, club chairperson, wrote to the Catholic parish requesting permission for a monument, inscribed ‘Den Opfern der Vertreibung aus den Ostgebieten’ to be placed in the centrally located Catholic church as most expellees were Catholic in faith. Its cost was 3,275 euros. A reply was received which indicated that the issue would be discussed at the next church meeting on 28 November 1995. On 24 January 1996 the club received a refusal letter, the reason being that expellees were not exclusively Catholic and suggesting that a better location was the town cemetery. It also reported: ‘Hinzuweisen wäre auch auf den Gedenkstein für die vertriebenen jüdischen Mitbürger Jenas in der Oberau’, yet no such

memorial exists in this area.⁵⁹ Additionally church records of the meeting of 28 November 1995 reveal that the issue was not discussed. The suspicion is that discussion took place away from an open meeting giving the impression that the topic was delicate and to be avoided.⁶⁰ On 12 December 1996 the expellee club chairperson Gerhard Stang wrote to the mayor, asking for permission to erect the monument at the North Cemetery, where many expellees were buried. A similar letter was sent to Herr Schenker, the head of the Culture Committee. The suggested inscription now read ‘Den Opfern des Krieges, der Flucht und Vertreibung aus den Ostgebieten’.⁶¹ Expellee files show also how the suggested monument design was reshaped over time, giving the impression that permission would not have been granted had the design and inscription not been amended. The 14 January 1997 Culture Committee minutes reveal approval for the monument, provided that the inscription is clarified and a suitable location is found. An addendum to the minutes shows the following. ‘Die Aufstellung des Gedenksteins wird durch die Garten- und Friedhofssatzung nicht geregelt. Der Ausschuß muß eine politische Entscheidung vorbereiten’.⁶² Then followed negotiation between cemetery officials and expellees. Günther Ahrendt was adamant that the monument should not be placed within the cemetery as there was no collective grave for expellees in this location. In his view a better location would be in the town centre like the registration office which had expellee

⁵⁹ Research by author and substantiated by the *Stadtarchiv*. A plaque at Jena West station does however commemorate Nazi victims: ‘Zum Gedenken an unsere Jenaer Mitbürger die rassistisch verfolgten Juden, Roma und Sinti, die von hier aus in die faschistischen Todeslager deportiert wurden’. Additionally a town centre monument commemorates victims of air raids.

⁶⁰ Catholic Church archive.

⁶¹ Expellee file documents.

⁶² StA Jena, Protokoll Kulturausschuß, 14 January 1997.

associations.⁶³ Finally a compromise was struck; the monument was unveiled *outside* the North Cemetery on 25 September 1998 (Fig. 18). Interestingly, in this case, expellees fought against a central location, perhaps because they associated memorialisation with mourning therefore preferring a cemetery location, or, as in other cases, they intuited that the monument might be defaced if it were centrally located.⁶⁴ The plain tombstone-like memorial is inscribed ‘Den Opfern von Krieg Flucht und Vertreibung zum Gedenken’.⁶⁵ No mention, however, was made of the old *Heimat*, the *Ostgebieten* part of the inscription had been dropped, and expellee victims had been extended to include victims of war. The monument was indeed later defaced.



Figure 18. Outside Jena North Cemetery

In November 2009 just before *Volkstrauertag* political agitators sprayed it with red paint and the expellee club received a bill for 350 euros from the Fire Service for cleaning it.⁶⁶ The club quarters were also sprayed with graffiti in

⁶³ Interview, Günther Ahrendt.

⁶⁴ Interview, Jürgen von Blaustark.

⁶⁵ Jena had 10,822 expellees on 20 January 1949. StA Jena F385 Statistische Berichte, 1948-9.

⁶⁶ Interview, Pagel and Franz Baltzer.

2011. Politics thus plays a great part in a monument's history. Inscriptions and locations must be approved by town councils and are therefore dependent on which party is in power at that time. The Erfurt BdV headquarters regards the Jena club, which now operates independently of the Thuringian BdV network, as right-wing.⁶⁷ An indicator of their stance is the motto for their *Tag der Heimat* in Jena on 24 September 2011; 'Wahrheit und Dialog – Schlüssel zur Verständigung'. The word 'truth' appears frequently in expellee literature, indicating that expellees believe the 'truth' has not been fully told and suggesting that their experiences are subject to silences.

Tensions regarding monument location are also illustrated in Arnstadt where a balance had to be struck between according a prominent position, the desire for a suitable place of mourning and averting risk of vandalism. In a reversal of the Jena standpoint, Jürgen von Blaustark, the Arnstadt expellee club chairperson indicated that expellees there wanted the monument to be situated in the town centre at the triangle of Thomas-Mann-Straße, Kasseler Straße and Richard-Wagner-Straße as this site had expellee associations, however, political pressure from the left led to its erection in the cemetery. Von Blaustark is now satisfied with the location, as he feels that it would have been damaged by political agitators had it been erected in the town centre.⁶⁸ The monument was erected on 19 November 2000 dedicated 'Zum Gedenken den Opfern von Flucht und Vertreibung 1945-1948' (Figure 19).⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Interview, Schütz.

⁶⁸ Interview, von Blaustark.

⁶⁹ On 31 December 1948 Arnstadt had 7,125 expellees and 21,862 locals. StA Weimar Akte 3665.



Figure 19. Arnstadt Cemetery

East German monuments focus frequently on all categories of victims of wars and expulsions, the expulsion seemingly taking a secondary place in the commemoration, whereas west German monument inscriptions usually concentrate more specifically on expellee victims. A monument in Altenburg was erected in the town cemetery, on 21 November 1992, with an inscription: ‘Den Opfern von Krieg und Terror zum Gedenken’. The expellee club wanted the words ‘Flucht und Vertreibung’ inscribed on it, but opposition was raised from the Jewish community; at the time of erection it was to be a monument for all victims. Later, however, it was decided to erect a plaque to Jewish victims on the Paunitzer Straße and by then it was too late to amend the wording on the expellee monument.⁷⁰ Expellee monuments are often concerned with disputed memories, particularly in east Germany, as we have seen.

⁷⁰ Interview Helga Steiner and Helmut Schönwald.

Although dedicated purely in this case to expellees, a simple bronze plaque at the entrance to the main station in Dresden is situated so high on the wall it is almost impossible to read, as though there is some shame in the dedication, or perhaps out of fear of it being defaced. Dedicated in 2008 the inscription reads ‘Gedenken an zahllose deutsche Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene, die im Schicksalsjahr 1945 im Dresdener Hauptbahnhof Zuflucht gefunden haben’ (Figures 20 and 21).⁷¹ The use of ‘Schicksal’, seen often in expellee memorialisation, is problematic, the implication being to disassociate any German culpability. Moreover, once again expellee suffering is set within a context of other victims’ suffering.



Figure 20. Dresden Station



Figure 21. Dresden close-up

On an adjacent wall and mirroring the expellee plaque is a similar, older tablet, which is dedicated to two victims of National Socialism, train-drivers Kurt Koch and Josef Kopsch who died in Sachsenhausen and Oranienburg

⁷¹ On 31 July 1947 Dresden town had 17,794 expellees out of a population of 450,358 while the wider Dresden area beyond the city boundaries had 50,144 expellees out of a population of 198,046. HStA Dresden, Min. des Innern. Nr. 2739. Blatt 23. Hauptabteilung Umsiedler Az. VI 5 Ga. A24.

respectively.⁷² Underneath the names stands *Frieden Einheit Aufbau*, wording reminiscent of early postwar communist party propaganda. The two plaques are positioned side-by-side, although some distance apart, and invite comparability by their similarity.

Use of aesthetics or imagery will attract attention and can fix a memory more intensely but the majority of east German monuments are plain in nature, with little adornment that could be seen to convey sentiment of the old *Heimat*. The Radeberg tombstone-like monument from 13 November 1994 exemplifies this. Standing at the crossroads of Dresdener Straße/ August-Bebel-Straße in a small green area, it is inscribed ‘Den Opfern von Krieg, Vertreibung und Terror’ (Figure 22). While placed in the town centre its understated design means it is easily bypassed.



Figure 22. Radeberg crossroads

⁷² Information obtained from telephone conversation with *Deutsche Bahn* personnel.

In even more minimalist commemoration in Ilmenau cemetery an addendum was made to the existing war monument on *Volkstrauertag* 1997 to additionally acknowledge expellee suffering. Consisting of three plain granite tombstone-like slabs, the first commemorates 145 victims of World War Two, the second is a quotation from Theodor Heuss exhorting peace and the third one now reads: 'Dem Andenken der unbekannten toten Soldaten gewidmet. Den Opfern von Flucht, Vertreibung, Deportation und Gewaltherrschaft'. The two monuments in Radeberg and Ilmenau also exemplify a characteristic of east German monuments, that is a tendency for ambiguity. The 'Terror' and 'Gewaltherrschaft' references could apply to the totalitarian GDR regime as well as to the National Socialist regime, or indeed have a universal application.

A monument transmits its message in various stages, from its conception to later commemorative services. At each juncture its meaning can be restated and conveyed, from publicity and public discussion in its early stages while funding is being raised and its formation and location debated, through to its inauguration, in addition to regular ceremonies that take place afterwards. Similar in design to the Radeberg monument, the Meiningen memorial in Thuringia, inscribed 'Den Opfern von Krieg und Vertreibung', was unveiled on 14 November 1999 but later remodelled on 3 October 2009, thanks to donations from expellees and the town. Small bushes mark out the territory. 'Mit der Neustaltung sollte eine abgeschlossene Wohnung für die Opfer erreicht werden!' proclaimed the November 2009 issue of *Der Vertriebene*. The reference to an enclosed home for the victims indicates a parallel with a genuinely bordered *Heimat*, a characteristic seen often in expellee monuments

where delineated edges mark out the territory of the memorial. In a reconciliatory context at the opening ceremony Elfi Storm, expellee club chairperson, spoke in commemoration of all sixty million innocent victims of the Second World War and her desires above all, for a peaceful terror-free world. She believes that such commemoration gives hope for the future. “‘In unser Gedenken schließen wir sie alle ein.’ Egal aus welchem Land, welcher Religion oder Weltanschauung’. For speaker Michael Heym, CDU politician, commemorative sites like this one, which is adjacent to war memorials, are ‘Lernorte der Menschlichkeit’.⁷³ This public ceremony in east Germany exemplifies the cultural memory norm of the period, namely an inclusivity of victimhood.

4. Expellee Monuments and Integration

Against the backdrop of expellee integration difficulties that I outlined in the introduction and the assimilation process that I discussed in Chapter Two I explore here the competing and changing nature of victims’ commemoration with particular reference to how expellees were initially discriminated against, and then belatedly recognised. I compare four monuments, two from West Germany: Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein and Maltersdorf, Bavaria; and two from East Germany; Freiberg and Pirna in Saxony.

⁷³ Hädicke, Kerstin, “‘Trauert wirklich unser ganzes Volk?’ Volkstrauertag: “Unter jedem Grabstein liegt eine Weltgeschichte” – Erinnerungen einer Vertriebenen – Trauern heißt Liebe’, *Meininger Tageblatt*, 17 November 2009.

4.1 From Marginalisation to Recognition: Kiel Eichhof Cemetery, Schleswig-Holstein, 1952

A common feature of German graveyards is the placing of war victims' memorials together in one area, often with memorials commemorating lost soldiers. When an expellee monument lies within a cemetery it is usually located in this vicinity. In the large Eichhof Park Cemetery this commemorative area is situated at the far southwestern corner well away from the main thoroughfare in field 59-61, the 'Kriegs-und Bombenopferfeld der Landeshauptstadt Kiel'. Expellees suffered discrimination, as I have shown, and expellees in the early years were even discriminated against in death. In their 1999 investigation within this cemetery Anja Krippner and Silke Weichmann note that expellees were often buried at the far edges of the cemetery in fields 46, 49, 50, 60 and 61, away from locals' graves in an area associated in the Nazi period with undesirables.⁷⁴ Expellee children were buried in field 49, still known today as the 'Kinderpolenfeld', showing the persistence of discriminatory nomenclature.⁷⁵ Not only did local people frequently specify that they did not want to be buried near expellees, it was common for officials between 1945 and 1950 to annotate expellee, foreigner and concentration camp deceased names with special signs in the burial registers. Krippner and Weichmann remark that: 'Zweifelloos wurden dadurch die Verstorbenen als Menschen "zweiter Klasse" abgestempelt'.⁷⁶ This situation clearly demonstrates the tension of the time between the locals and

⁷⁴ Krippner, Anja and Silke Weichmann, 'Diskriminierung und Ausgrenzung bis ins Grab: Flüchtlinge auf dem Friedhof Eichhof' in *Flüchtlinge in Schleswig-Holstein nach 1945: Zwischen Ausgrenzung und Integration* ed. by Tobias Hermann and Karl Heinrich Pohl (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1999), pp. 127-48 (p. 136).

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 136. In 2011 there are no traces of expellee graves in this area; however in Germany graves are only maintained for 25 years, unless a fee is paid for them to be retained.

⁷⁶ Krippner and Weichmann, p. 147.

the expellees; at this stage the expellees were hardly in any position to assert equal rights for themselves with regard to burial locations. The Kiel example is not a solitary occurrence. Fendl notes that in many parishes cemeteries were laid out in out of the way places to keep expellee graves apart from locals, often alongside areas where suicide victims were laid to rest, and discriminatory practices even went so far as permitting only one church bell at expellee funerals in Mariakirchen, Bavaria, while two were rung for locals.⁷⁷

In 1947 the city of Kiel held a competition for the design of a memorial to honour victims of National Socialism, however this was not to commemorate victims resulting from Nazi policies such as Jews, but instead German victims who had suffered as a consequence of the regime. In the following years a huge block-paving wall memorial designed by the garden architects Lorenzen was erected in field 59 to commemorate 2,835 victims of mass bombing raids.⁷⁸ The victims were from over ninety air raids on the city and its harbour and included Germans and foreign forced workers. Additionally victims of local concentration camps like the twenty-one former inmates of Neuengamme, who died when the Cap Arcona ship was attacked by the British in Neustadt Bay on 3 May 1945, are commemorated by the same memorial.⁷⁹ The first inscription for the mass grave reads: '2835 Opfer des Bombenkrieges mahnen zum Frieden'. On a further plate, without a figure for victims, is inscribed 'Zum ehrenden Gedächtnis der Opfer der Gewaltherrschaft 1933-1945 die auf diesem Friedhof ruhen', which has the effect of distancing the German population from the Third Reich and turning

⁷⁷ Fendl, p. 90.

⁷⁸ Stolz, Gerd, *Kleiner Führer über den Kieler Park-Friedhof Eichhof* (Kiel, Husum Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft, 2000), p. 87.

⁷⁹ The sinking of the Cap Arcona resulted in an overall loss of around 5,000 lives.

Germans into victims of the regime. Indeed, Uwe Danker and Irene Dittrich find it scandalous that undoubtedly due to the 1950s Zeitgeist, German persecuted *and* persecutors are commemorated by this memorial, with specific mention of air raid victims, but no mention of the 675 foreign victims (including a few Germans), who were murdered in nearby concentration camps. They consider that the subsequently added supplementary plate is insufficient, serving merely an ‘Alibi-Funktion’ and call it a ‘perfide Logik’ that the city’s commemoration ‘gedenkt nur selbstmitleidig der eigenen Bombenopfern, der eigenen Leiderfahrung’,⁸⁰ and their criticism is justified. In field 61 lies a small Russian memorial for 172 Russian prisoners, inscribed in Russian script, which was defaced in 1956 and not considered worthy of renovation at the time of the Cold War.⁸¹ Close to these memorials, in field 55, a simple wooden high cross was erected in 1952 and renewed in 2005, inscribed ‘Die Heimatvertriebenen gedenken ihrer Toten’ (Figure 23). Surrounded by a low-level hedged border and a white flower-bed the monument mourns the dead of the *Heimat*, rather than the loss of the *Heimat*. Although the memorial does show some public recognition by its erection in a public cemetery, the monument is situated where expellees were placed to rest, far from mainstream view and unmarked on any graveyard plan, seemingly still somewhat marginalised.

⁸⁰ Danker, Uwe and Irene Dittrich, *Verscharrt, Verdrängt, Vergessen: NS-Opfer auf dem Friedhof Eichhof/Kiel* (Kiel: Neuer Malik, 1992), pp. 19 and 28.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.



Figure 23. Kiel, Eichhof Cemetery

4.2 From Victims to Honoured Citizens: Mellersdorf Cemetery, Bavaria, 1995

In contrast to some monuments that are now being moved away from central public view, like the Timmendorfer Strand monument mentioned earlier which has been relocated from the seafront promenade to a more remote *Waldfriedhof*, some plaques are appearing in public places like town halls, where commemorative tablets are normally to be found, in public recognition of the expellee history. Shifts in the location and forms of memorialisation suggest that the time is now considered right to close the chapter on this historical episode, showing expellees not as victims, rather more as honoured citizens, in recognition of full assimilation. West German monuments sometimes acknowledge the contribution made by the expellees to the town, as exemplified by Bayreuth, where a plaque that praises the contribution of the expellees to postwar reconstruction was placed in 1995 on the wall of the old castle on Luitpoldplatz in the town centre. East German memorialisation does not convey such sentiment; through an SED directive at the beginning of

the 1950s expellees and their problems and worries were no longer officially recognised in the GDR.⁸² As they were not considered a separate entity in society, public acknowledgement of their contribution to postwar rebuilding is unlikely.

In addition to three earlier expellee monuments in Straubing, Bavaria, the plaque placed prominently on the wall of the town hall in 2005 adjacent to the Tourist Information Office on the sixtieth anniversary of the expulsions has a two-way commemorative purpose, memorialising expellee suffering and the lost *Heimat*, as well as thanking the new *Heimat*. It reads: ‘Die Heimatvertriebenen gedenken der verlorenen Heimat und der Opfer der Vertreibung. Die Stadt Straubing hat nach dem 2. Weltkrieg mehr als 8000 Vertriebene hilfsbereit aufgenommen’. The Tourist Office holds a colourful information leaflet that also explains the various coats of arms displayed on the plaque.

A *Mahnmal* in Mallersdorf cemetery, Bavaria, erected in 1995 by the Sudeten German *Landsmannschaft* endeavours to cover many functions in its dedication (Figure 24).⁸³ Expellee monuments often bear the characteristics of a *Mahnmal*, one that has an admonitory function and warns of the consequences of potential repetition. Koshar indicates that such monuments not only remind observers of an event or a victim of an event but also through the act of remembrance explicitly attempt to prevent recurrence of the tragedy.⁸⁴ In the same gesture this reminds us just how bad the original event was and how much expellees suffered.

⁸² Wille, ‘Gehasst und Umsorgt’, p. 43.

⁸³ The highest proportion of expellees in Bavaria came from the neighbouring Sudetenland, followed by Silesia, Bauer, p. 26.

⁸⁴ Koshar, p. 118.



Figure 24. Mallersdorf

Use of *Findlingssteine* for expellee monuments, those erratic stones displaced to Germany from Scandinavia by glaciers during the ice-age, is exceedingly popular, perhaps due to the metaphorical significance of the breaking up of boundaries and shifting of continents.⁸⁵ A simple metal plaque affixed to an erratic boulder is situated in one corner of the *Gemeindefriedhof* and reads: ‘50 Jahre Vertreibung 1945-6. -Zum Gedenken an die Toten. -Zur Erinnerung an die verlorene Heimat. -Als Mahnung für die Zukunft. -Als Dank an die neue Heimat. -Und zur Versöhnung über Grenzen hinweg’. Its simplicity of form represents a clear effort to avoid ethical pitfalls and the careful wording aims to cover the issues comprehensively.

⁸⁵ Hesse and Purpus suggest a more pragmatic explanation: that these unpolished stones are cheaper, p. 50.

4.3 From Taboo to Invisible Commemoration: Pirna, Saxony, 2004

The design for a monument in Pirna, east Germany, was won in competition by Dresden sculptor Konstanze Feindt-Eißner and unveiled in Brückenstraße on *Volkstrauertag* 2004. The 2.4 metre high sandstone memorial contains an inscription ‘Allen Opfern von Krieg, Gewalt, Vertreibung’ beneath which two sculpted figures, one male and one female, bow their heads, perhaps in shame, or grief, or perhaps because of the weight of the past (Figure 25).⁸⁶ The word ‘Allen’ clearly signifies all victims, not just those ‘aus der Heimat’. On the back is inscribed ‘Gegen das Vergessen’. While at first it would seem that such an arresting memorial would stand out, in reality its location is somewhat hidden away in a green area, raised above a promenade by the river and this means the monument is easily overlooked.



Figure 25. Pirna ‘Gegen das Vergessen’

⁸⁶ On 31 July 1947 Pirna’s population was 164,386, including 45,673 expellees. HStA Dresden, Min. des Innern. Nr. 2739. Blatt 23. Hauptabteilung Umsiedler Az. VI 5 Ga. A24.

There is no signposting. Conversely, two other 2010 Pirna monuments to victims of National Socialism are extremely well signposted and located; the memorial to euthanasia victims by Schloß Sonnenstein and the travelling 'Grey Bus' monument, also for euthanasia victims (from 2011 in Cologne), are both placed in prominent town centre locations. The 'Grey Bus' memorial stands in a green area where other monuments lie, such as the one headed 'Die Toten mahnen', on a pedestrian route from the station to the town centre, and its highly visible position may be thought necessary, as it is a temporary exhibition. However it also suggests a hierarchy of victims whereby expellee victims are placed lower down the scale than victims of National Socialism. It appears difficult to acknowledge expellee suffering without appearing revanchist. On the one hand the belated opportunity to memorialise the *Heimat* and expellee suffering released by the sudden fall of communism has led to a number of potentially quite prominent memorials. However, the lack of a discourse on *Heimat* memorialisation to fit with the current political context appears to leave monuments ambiguously sited, with ambiguous wording that slides between reconciliation and revanchism.

4.4 From Forgetting to Acknowledging: Freiberg *Flüchtlingsfriedhof*, Saxony, 2002

More than 72,000 expellees were taken into a reception camp at Freiberg, east Germany and between 1945 and 1948 1,375 deceased expellees were buried in a so-called refugee cemetery by the Donatsfriedhof in Himmelfahrtsgasse.⁸⁷ After 1947 the SED authorities forbade any mention of the origins of expellees on gravestones, or in church registers or on death

⁸⁷ *Vertriebenen-Friedhof* Freiberg book, Freiberg expellee club, no page numbering.

certificates, the opposite approach to the Kiel example.⁸⁸ Over the years the cemetery was forgotten about and levelled out; the local SED regarded the whole area as an ‘Ehrenfriedhof der Sowjetarmee’. After the *Wende* the quickly-founded expellee club campaigned for recognition of the cemetery and the first memorial site in Saxony of its type, a ‘Stein der Mahnung’, was erected on 24 April 1993.⁸⁹ In the years that followed the club raised finance to fully restore the cemetery with headstones for the graves, and *Heimat* origins were researched and restored to the records. Since 14 September 2002 a three part memorial stone with bronze plaques has stood there, beside the graves, including, very uncharacteristically for east Germany, explicit details of expellee experiences and suffering (Figure 26).



Figure 26. Freiberg Cemetery

⁸⁸ Interview, Hubertus Unfried.

⁸⁹ On 31 July 1947 Freiberg's population was 107,146 including 31,603 expellees. HStA Dresden, Min. des Innern. Nr. 2739. Blatt 23. Hauptabteilung Umsiedler Az. VI 5 Ga. A24.

The specific nature of the site as expellee cemetery, plus the ethically sound work on researching key details of dead individuals have created a context for a less ambiguous dedication centred wholly on expellee loss, according dignity to individuals and sidestepping the difficulties of collective commemoration. The strongly worded inscription implies that not only explicitly named physical causes, but the psychological loss of the *Heimat* have resulted in loss of life:

Ihr Schicksal bleibt unvergessen. Auf diesem Friedhof fanden 1375 Männer, Frauen und Kinder aus Schlesien, Pommern, Sudetenland und Ost-, West Preußen ihre letzte Ruhestätte. Nach dem Ende des 2. Weltkrieges vertrieben, starben sie hier in Freiberg an den zugefügten Wunden, an Hunger und Kälte, Entkräftung und vor Schmerz über den Verlust ihrer Heimat.

Under coats of arms of the lost lands on the middle plaque reads: ‘Zum ehrenden Gedenken der verstorbenen Heimatvertriebenen Deutschen des zweiten Weltkrieges’. The right plaque contains details of towns from where the expellees were driven out. Their rights as individuals to be known in death is part of a trend in memorialisation; the Washington Holocaust museum, for example, allocates visitors arbitrarily the name of a victim so that a personal fate can be followed and commemorated with perhaps greater empathy for an individual’s suffering. Similarly the Holocaust memorial in Berlin has a ‘Raum der Namen’ where visitors to the website can follow virtually the biographies and fate of certain Jewish victims. The Freiberg monument, as is typical for east Germany, does not deploy symbols to convey a sense of *Heimat* loss, as evident in many west German monuments. The eight coats of arms of the lost lands on the middle bronze plaque, do however, present a sense of pride in, and identification with, the old *Heimat*.

5. Symbols of the *Heimat*

5.1 *Heimat* Loss and *Heimat* Pride

As recognition dawned that there would be no return to the old *Heimat*, use of symbolism in memorialisation became more widespread. As the past homeland and life was inaccessible other forms of continuity were necessary. Symbols were used to encourage identification with the lost *Heimat* or flight and expulsion as a way of consolidating collective identity and publicly acknowledging the experiences. Aesthetic examples include nautical emblems to signify the flight over the *Ostsee* like the anchor used as an *Ehrenmal* in Büsum old cemetery, Schleswig-Holstein; maps of old boundaries; use of local dialect in inscriptions, and stained glass windows like that in the *Pommernkapelle* in Kiel's St. Nikolai church in the *Alten Markt*, which contains images of Pomerania and flight and expulsion.⁹⁰ Natural materials like earth and water are used as motifs of the *Heimat* and convey the association of *Heimat* discourse with nature. As Koshar notes, increasing use of monuments from the nineteenth century by a growing number of groups demonstrated how 'historical artifacts that situated them in meaningful historical consequences explaining the relationship between the past and an ever more complicated present' were used, within which the symbols 'could be reduced to a common denominator of identity'.⁹¹

Remarkable for the early use of allegory in such a setting is the 1952 expellee monument in Augsburg West cemetery, Bavaria (Figure 27). No tombstone-like artefact but a stone tree is inscribed: 'Gebrochen ist dieser

⁹⁰ Lotte Usadel designed the two stained glass windows in 1957. Additionally a large tapestry hangs nearby, created by Brigitte Schirren between 1952-61. Church booklet, *Die Nikolaikirche in Kiel*.

⁹¹ Koshar, pp. 30 and 53.

Baum, doch er lebt. Was durch Haß getrennt wurde, kann nur durch die Liebe wieder vereint werden. Den Toten des deutschen Ostens zum Gedenken. Die Stadt Augsburg 1952’.



Figure 27. Augsburg West Cemetery

In a clear association of *Heimat* with nature, it is used to illustrate the loss of the homeland, conveying the *Heimat* symbolically in a fusion of nature and culture. The first sentiment to be expressed is that of *Heimat* deprivation, ‘gebrochen’ invoking a strong sense of suffering that reflects the socio-political climate of the early 1950s. Yet there is hope for a return; the context being one in which politicians and the general public still believed in the possibility of border revision. The irredentism conveyed through the attribute ‘deutschen’ is softened by the reference to love and the implication that territorial restoration might be achieved peacefully, either the lands returning to Germany, or the roots of the old *Heimat* being retained in expellee

identities, while they resettled into a new *Heimat*. The use of a tree connotes longevity and durability but also renewal, a continuity of identity being perpetuated in the new *Heimat*. Whilst not particularly discernible as an oak, which could be linked to German nationalism with its traditional connotations of loyalty and resoluteness, it has unmistakable associations with *Wald*, that ancient locale of mysticism and romanticism, long loved by Germans and perceived often as a rural idyll far from urbanity. Similarly, in George Mosse's study of war memorials he discusses how *Ehrenhain*, heroes' groves, appropriated nature, including the symbolism of the tree and the wood, which was typically German, to stand for 'innocence and eternal life but also for historical continuity'.⁹² Unusually, the expellee monument appears to have been erected by the town of Augsburg, rather than by expellees alone, perhaps because the town's postwar population increased so rapidly and with a positive effect on its infrastructure.⁹³ According to Hesse and Purpus, 32% of expellee monuments in the whole of West Germany were erected by the community, town or region, rather than expellee-initiated,⁹⁴ thereby being part of public sphere memorialisation not just private commemoration. The relatively positive, although slightly disingenuous inscription is also indicative of a less victim-oriented perspective with its focus on the future, albeit still including a peaceful possibility of return, rather than dwelling on past injustices.

⁹² Mosse, George L., *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 110.

⁹³ 30,000 expellees from the Sudetenland alone resettled in Augsburg, which had been 40% destroyed in the war, as well as expellees from the Banat, the Buchenland, the Baltics, and Romania. Brunner-Dawidek, Barbara, Orfried Kotzian and Willi Reisser (eds.), *Die Deutschen aus dem Osten in Augsburg* (Augsburg: Bukowina-Institut, 1998), p. 18.

⁹⁴ Hesse and Purpus, p. 52. Their interpretation is, however, caveated, and speculative in two-thirds of cases.

Also in the town of Augsburg, a monument erected in 1980 in Wittelsbacher Park in the form of a fountain stands in framed symmetry with the tall, cylindrical, modern *Kongresshalle* behind it, celebrating cultural and historical achievements of the Sudeten Germans (Figure 28). The inscription on the fountain reads:

Die Stadt Reichenberg wurde im 13. Jahrhundert gegründet. Ihre Bürger entwickelten sie zum Hauptort der deutschen Industrie und Kultur in Böhmen. Sie liebten Ihre Stadt und Ihre Heimat aus der sie 1945 vertrieben wurden. Als Zeichen des Dankes errichteten im Jahre 1980 in Ihrer Patenstadt Augsburg diesen Brunnen die Sudetendeutschen aus Stadt und Land Reichenberg.



Figure 28. Augsburg Wittelsbacher Park

Once more a connection with nature is seen, this time through the use of water, which swirls round the elaborate structure, the monument thus embodying *Heimat* ideology in a fusion of old culture memorialised within the new *Heimat*. As Koshar comments, ‘the Heimat movement’s perspective

rested on the idea that the landscape revealed the unique memory and culture of the people'.⁹⁵ Made of stone, the structure has been sculpted with heads of renowned individuals, such as that of the entrepreneur and global icon (and Nazi associate) Ferdinand Porsche, who was born in Maffersdorf, near Reichenberg, Bohemia in 1875. Other engraved figures include Franz Bayer, one time mayor, the composer Camillo Horn and Heinrich von Liebig, the textile factory owner. Some older figures are clad in traditional costumes with ruffed necks, as if to emphasise the long history of Reichenberg, a town that has been a *Patenschaft* of Augsburg since 1955 and which shared a similar industrial structure.⁹⁶ Also included are colourful coats of arms and engravings of noteworthy old buildings. To see the images one must peer carefully through the swirling water; the liquid distorts the symbols and also makes it necessary to study carefully what is being displayed. Five benches surround the monument as if to invite observers to stay a while. The monument celebrates aspects of a German culture presented as dating back centuries, reinforcing its importance. It enables a transfer of memory and pride from the old to the new *Heimat*, portraying expellees in this case less as victims and rather more as worthy contributors, thus bolstering their identity. As well as commemorating the past, expellees are communicating the historical cultural and economic significance of their region and its prestige to the host community. Interestingly, Augsburg is described as a *Patenschaft* of Reichenberg, reversing the usual hierarchy where the new *Heimat* sponsors the old one, thus reinforcing the message of Augsburg's enrichment by the newcomers. The monument includes industrial innovators, cultural and

⁹⁵ Koshar, p. 69.

⁹⁶ Brunner-Dawidek, p. 18.

political figures, emphasising the potential of the Reichenberg community to continue to make a great contribution. By implication, the injustice of destroying such a worthy community is displayed, but a sense of future hope for the new society is also conveyed. The emphasis on the innovative and cultural prowess of the ethnic eastern Germans, the pride in the old *Heimat*, is demonstrated here in a way analogous to an exhibition, the theme of my next chapter. Even in the 1980s, in a socio-political context when successful integration of expellees was taken for granted, this memorial conveys a sense that individuals needed to emphasise their cultural distinctiveness within the local community and demonstrates the importance of the old *Heimat* to their identity.

Memorialisation is a two-way process; important for the initiators but also enhanced by the knowledge that viewers will notice the monument and realise its significance. An inscription, naturally, conveys a message, but this is enhanced by a monument's form. The more striking its appearance, the more likely the sentiment is to be received. As Grant Pooke and Diana Newall note: 'although a cliché, the idea that an image or object can convey a thousand words at least recognises that art can be uniquely expressive of ideas and associations – sensuous, intellectual or experiential – more easily felt than explained'.⁹⁷ Through use of symbolism a memorial can signify a deeper meaning, beyond its overt appearance. By use of metaphor, allegory or symbol the intention is to produce complex reactions in the observer. Rosalind Krauss indicates that art is not just about denotation, namely identifying what an image represents, but also about connotation, that is how

⁹⁷ Pooke, Grant and Diana Newell, *Art History: The Basics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 16.

its extended meanings are perceived.⁹⁸ The Rübezahl figure that appears frequently in expellee discourse exemplifies this concept.

On 12 July 1964 a *Rübezahlskulptur* monument was unveiled on the *Jakobsweg* pilgrims' route to Santiago de Compostela high above the town of Bamberg (Figure 29). Its setting on a pilgrims' trail is significant due to the association with a journey to or from a place of historical, religious or cultural importance, in this case the *Heimat*. Placed at a crossroads of the Wildensorger Strasse and a very minor road, the Rinnersteig, the sculpture looks out over the town and surrounding countryside, a vista that is reminiscent of the Giant Mountains.

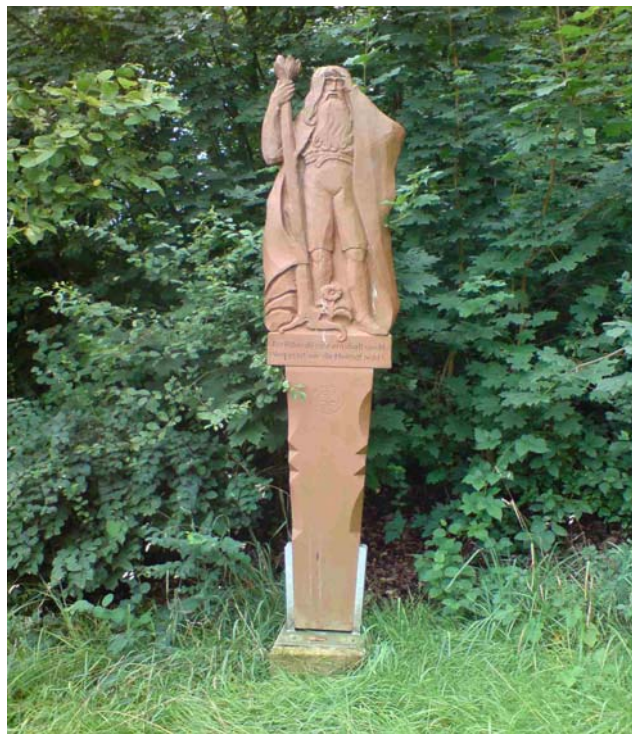


Figure 29. Bamberg, Rübezahl

⁹⁸ Krauss, cited in Hatt, Michael and Charlotte Klonk, *Art History: A Critical Introduction to its Methods* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 206.

The inscription reads: ‘Der Rübezahl sehr ernsthaft spricht: Vergesst mir die Heimat nicht’. A bench has been placed beside the monument which originally had a ‘Panoramazeichnung des Riesengebirges mit seinen wichtigsten Stationen’ on it but this is long gone; only the screw holes are visible and nettles are growing through the slats of the bench, conveying a sense of disuse. Georg Schleicher carved the 2.8 metre high wooden figure that ‘soll an die Riesengebirgsheimat erinnern’.⁹⁹ An important part of regional folklore, Rübezahl is a mountain spirit, sometimes playful and generous and sometimes malevolent when crossed. A leaflet produced by the *Schlesisches Museum* in Görlitz notes that Rübezahl was portrayed in earlier stories as a demon and later he became a moral figure who helped out those in distress and punished wrongdoers. Perhaps he is being utilised by expellees for such an undertaking, to assist them and to avenge the wrong caused to them? The sculpted figure of Rübezahl enables the culture of the old *Heimat* to be transplanted into the new *Heimat*, something acknowledged by the *Volksblatt*, which headlined on 9 July 1964 ‘Rübezahl nach Bamberg umgesiedelt’. The newspaper noted that the symbol ‘soll ein Stück der alten in die neue Heimat versetzen’.¹⁰⁰ With heavy emphasis laid on justice and rights the *Volksblatt* reported later about the unveiling ceremony. ‘Mit den Worten “Rübezahl ist unsterblich, er soll unter uns weiterleben”, hoffte StR Riedel abschliessend, dass die Statue immer wieder an das Schicksal eines deutschen Landes im Osten erinnern solle, als ein Symbol von Recht und Gerechtigkeit, von Treue und Heimatliebe’.¹⁰¹ What happened to the expellees or the Eastern

⁹⁹ StA Bamberg, *Fränkischer Tag*, 8 July 1964, Nr. 154, p. 14.

¹⁰⁰ StA Bamberg, *Volksblatt*, 9 July 1964, Nr. 155, p. 11.

¹⁰¹ StA Bamberg, *Volksblatt*, 13 July 1964, Nr. 158, p. 12.

lands is reported without context, and once again the word ‘Schicksal’ is used, as if the event happened without German initiation of aggression.

The Rübezahl figure is used here as a sign of the old *Heimat* and thus connotes the loss of the *Heimat*, because members of a *Heimat* community see the mystical, legendary figure as alluding to their old *Heimat*. The Rübezahl legend, as part of Bohemian and Silesian folklore, helped engender a sense of belonging to a *Heimat*, a part of personal identity. Many children from Bohemia and Silesia grew up with stories about Rübezahl and his antics formed part of their regional and individual identity, effectively part of their *Heimat*, a legend of childhood.¹⁰² Rübezahl is a myth, an invented figure used in the case of expellee monuments as a symbol to support the imaginary concept of *Heimat*: a myth is thus perpetuated by a myth.

In their discussion of the place of semiotics in art history, Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk note that ‘the emphasis of semiotics is on the reading of the image rather than its making’.¹⁰³ They go on to say that in its most radical form the image can only be understood from the view of the contemporary spectator. There is, therefore, not just one meaning to be decoded in the figure but multiple meanings that take into account the initiator and maker of it, as well as the observer. The image can be understood but differently understood; when ripped out of its original context and placed in another, new meanings emerge. To an expellee the figure may induce a feeling of *Heimweh*, or provide comfort or a sense of identification whereas a casual observer today, in another epoch, may just see an intriguing carved figure, find it interesting and recognise it perhaps as a spirit of the woods, yet

¹⁰² Preußler, Otfried, *Mein Rübezahlbuch: Zwei Dutzend und drei Geschichten vom Herrn des Riesengebirges* (Vienna: Thienemann, 1993).

¹⁰³ Hatt and Klonk, p. 200.

be mystified about its allegorical relevance as applied to expellees. As Reinhart Koselleck comments with regard to war memorials but applicable to this context: ‘Alle politischen und sozialen Identifikationen [...] verflüchtigen sich im Ablauf der Zeit. Damit ändert sich die Botschaft, die einem Denkmal eingestiftet worden war’.¹⁰⁴ The striving by expellees to inject some of their old culture into the new *Heimat* may console them and is an attempt to communicate a message to future observers from their perspective, but the latter remains purely dependent on the later spectator’s interpretation.

A contemporary viewer in Straubing, Bavaria would see a stone statue of Saint Nepomuk and be unaware of its significance, even when reading the inscription on its base (Figure 30).¹⁰⁵ Placed there on 30 June 1991 the statue is inscribed: ‘St. Johannes v Nepomuk 1343-1393, gestiftet von den Sudetendeutschen und den Bürgern der Stadt Straubing’. Here a symbol is used to represent the old *Heimat* without direct reference to expellee suffering or the old *Heimat*, other than the fact that Sudeten Germans donated the statue, as well as the townspeople, in uncommon joint contribution. Born in Pomuk in Bohemia around 1345, Johannes von Nepomuk has passed into German-Bohemian legend as a martyr, following his persecution and drowning in the Vltava river at Prague. Allegedly, as he drowned, five flames were observed in the water around him, which is why his head is usually displayed surrounded by five stars.¹⁰⁶ The choice of a martyr as symbol for the *Heimat* is striking, implying that the experience of expulsion can be

¹⁰⁴ Koselleck, Reinhart, ‘Kriegerdenkmale als Identitätsstiftungen’ in *Identität: Poetik und Hermeneutik* ed. by Odo Marquard and Karl Heinz Stierle, (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1979), pp. 255-7 (p. 257).

¹⁰⁵ Straubing had 25,128 locals and 9,577 *Zugewanderte*, namely 27.6%, on 15 November 1946. StA Regensburg: Amtliches Zahlenmaterial, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Seethaler, Theodor, ‘Brückenheiliger und Brückenbauer: Seit 20 Jahren steht die Nepomuk-Statue an der Schlossbrücke’, *Straubinger Tagblatt*, 1 July 2011.

understood as martyrdom. In a ceremony commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the statue, expellee Manfred Hubl remarked that Nepomuk stood on the bridge across which many refugees had streamed, ‘als sichtbares Zeichen für das Unrecht der Vertreibung’.¹⁰⁷



Figure 30. Straubing, Nepomuk

Drawing attention to Nepomuk as a victim of reasons of state, thereby paralleling his experience to expellees, expellee club chairperson Theodor Seethaler furthermore explained that ‘damals war uns Nepomuk auf den Brücken der Heimat, der uns bei der Suche nach den Wurzeln stärkte, dem wir uns anvertrauen konnten’,¹⁰⁸ illustrating how expellees used symbols to

¹⁰⁷ Seethaler, Theodor, ‘Das Brückenwunder’, *Sudetendeutsche Zeitung*, 29 July 2011.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

strengthen their identity. He also emphasised Nepomuk's role as a bridge builder between people, places and countries, naming him a 'hoffnungsvolles Symbol für die Achtung der Menschenrechte und für brückenschlagende Versöhnung'.¹⁰⁹ Inaugurated in 1991, in a climate which encouraged expellee memorialisation, and a cultural memory landscape which was revisiting a narrative that focused on Germans as victims, the statue demonstrates the longevity of expellees' strong feelings for the old *Heimat*, forty-six years after the expulsions. Twenty years later, in 2011, speeches at the public ceremony place commemoration of German suffering within a paradigm of human rights and hope for the future in a united Europe, in line with the cultural memory norms of the time, but show how expellees still regard the expulsion as a crime and view themselves as victims, thus exemplifying in this case a hybridity between public and private memories.

The veneration given by expellees to a powerful symbol, the *Heimaterde*, is exemplified by a memorial in Apolda cemetery, East Germany, dated 10 May 1995 (Figure 31).¹¹⁰ Carried on the flight as crumbs in pockets or in a bag, *Heimaterde* often stood in a position of honour in the new abode 'im Herrgottswinkel in einem Glaspokal'.¹¹¹ The reverence thus accorded to the *Heimaterde* is similar to the niche shrines to household gods

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. The BdV-Straubing-Bogen is a thriving society with members from the Sudetenland, Silesia, West and East Prussia, and ethnic Germans from Transylvania, Russia and the Banat. Each former region has an active club with regular activities with the aim of keeping the old culture alive. Some members are young; either second or third-generation descendants or *Spätaussiedler*. Straubing has already 32 streets with names from the old territories and expellees are campaigning for another one to be named after the Banat region. Seethaler is also promoting the idea that that expellees' gravestones are engraved with 'welche Heimat wir verbunden sind'. BdV meeting, 15 April 2013.

¹¹⁰ On 31 December 1948 Apolda's population numbered 7,718 expellees and 26,011 locals. StA Weimar Akte 3665.

¹¹¹ Lehmann, p. 103.

in Roman villas.¹¹² It was also quite normal for *Heimat* earth to be given as Christmas presents, or as the top prize in a sweepstake.¹¹³ The Apolda monument is formed as a triangle with three chambers, each of which holds soil from a region of the lost *Heimat*: East Prussia, West Prussia and the Sudetenland, and resembles a grave in an echo of its environment, thus connoting grief.¹¹⁴ The inscription reads: ‘Im Gedenken an das Unrecht und die Opfer der Vertreibung’. This is atypically specific for east Germany as it identifies the expulsion as a crime and commemorates purely the expulsion victims, possibly due to the political alignment of the town in 1995.¹¹⁵



Figure 31. Apolda Cemetery

¹¹² The second episode of the soap *Lindenstraße*, broadcast on ARD on 15 December 1985, showed an elderly lady selling jars of *Heimaterde*, labelled up with its origin, as one might sell local honey.

¹¹³ Lehmann, p. 103.

¹¹⁴ The memorial site at Oberschleißheim, Bavaria includes numerous vessels of *Heimat* earth. Files in the East and West Prussian Foundation nearby contain details of its origins.

¹¹⁵ The CDU were in power in 1995, the party with most sympathy towards the expellees.

The use of earth as the absolute essence of *Heimat* is symbolic, functioning on a number of levels as icon, index and symbol using Charles Sanders Peirce's methodology of semeiosis or signification.¹¹⁶ The icon is a sign that works by resembling something, the index does not resemble the object but alludes to it and a symbol is 'a mark or word or image whose meaning is conventional'; it 'means something because all the members of a community use it that way'.¹¹⁷ The sign, the *Heimaterde*, therefore stands for the object, the *Heimat* and produces a reaction or some contemplation in the mind of the observer. *Heimaterde* is representational yet is also a genuine element of the territorial homeland, conveying a sense of ownership and belonging and so bears particular significance. It is a universal symbol for expellees from all the lost regions, not just a regional symbol like Rübezahl from the Giant Mountains. It is as if the spiritual notion of *Heimat* has invested the earth with quasi-magical powers of protection, making it a totem, perhaps reminiscent of the way that a golem was shaped by the Chief Rabbi of Prague from the clay banks of the Vltava river to defend the Prague ghetto from anti-Semitic attacks. The use of *Heimat* earth in the Apolda monument is therefore particularly potent, calling into play the quasi-magical power of the transplanted *Heimaterde* and demonstrating clearly an acknowledgement of *Heimat* loss.

While the previous examples concern symbols that are used to connote meaning, the carefully sculpted stone in 2005 by an expellee at Westerrönfeld, Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein, is intended to be read as a short history of the

¹¹⁶ Hatt and Klonk, p. 209.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 209.

expulsion and its aftermath, as well as thanking the new *Heimat* for providing a new home for the expellees (Figure 32).



Figure 32. Rendsburg Westerrönfeld

Harri Marggraff, expelled as a sixteen year old from Pomerania had always wanted to create a monument ‘zu verdeutlichen was passiert ist’. When asked why, he replied ‘in erster Linie, dass nichts vergessen wird’. He decided that symbolic representation was the best means to sum up the experiences and deliberately engraved small symbols in the stone.¹¹⁸ He located a sandstone block measuring 180cm by 90cm by 55cm in the 1980s but commenced work only when he neared retirement.¹¹⁹ Marggraff used the apocalypse to represent the burning destruction and chaos of the flight. To him, the end of the world was a horror akin to flight and expulsion. Figures portray the hunger, thirst and cold of the trek over the Haff and a woman with arms held

¹¹⁸ Interview, Harri Marggraff.

¹¹⁹ Nicolai-Kolb, Britta, *Westerrönfeld Geschichte und Geschichten* (Osterrönfeld: RD Druck und Verlaghaus, 2005), p. 520.

high portrays the arrival in Schleswig-Holstein: ‘Meinung – sie kommt in Paradies’.¹²⁰ The local farmers, who were sceptical of the new arrivals, nevertheless hold open a door and hands held apart show helplessness and uncertainty. On the upper stone are carved two wavy long lines, expressing the torpedoing of the Wilhelm Gustloff and the Goya ships, with a loss of 16,000 lives. The reverse side of the stone shows two young children planting a tree, depicting roots forming in the new *Heimat*, and clasped hands show ‘nun haben wir uns kennengelernt’.¹²¹ Coats of arms illustrate the origins of the expellees and a huge North German oak tree signifies security in the new *Heimat*. Beside the stone is a window from a refugee ship, in which the parish placed a script to aid understanding of the monument; not Marggraff’s words but he approved them. The stone was unveiled in an official ceremony to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of war’s end. Although Marggraff suffered on the trek over the Haff, travelled alone, was bombed en route and saw many casualties, his arrival and aftermath in Schleswig-Holstein seemed not particularly problematic, perhaps a reason for the relatively positive message conveyed by the stone. However Marggraff does indeed keep his feelings for the old *Heimat* alive; his children and grandchildren hear his stories, particularly at Christmas time, and the room in which our interview took place had a large map of Pomerania on the wall, together with a tapestry of Stettin.

¹²⁰ Interview, Marggraff.

¹²¹ Ibid.

5.2 Passive Victim or Active Agent? The Female Form in Four Expellee Monuments

Around twenty expellee monuments throughout Germany use the mother or female figure as a central feature. The traditional concept of *Heimat* is one that is clearly gendered, the constant woman/mother who cares for, or even embodies the *Heimat* versus the man who may leave the homeland in order to defend it, or who has the opportunity to leave and return. Women look after the home, care for and educate the children and represent a point of orientation for all family members. While men were on the move, women were fixed to one place, the *Heimat*, and became symbols of stability and continuity, although ironically in this context women were the ones predominantly on the move, on the treks westward. Thus a double injustice was invoked, the *Heimat* was lost and the *Heimat* creators forced out, although normally symbols of permanence and continuity.

At the time the first expellee monuments were being erected in West Germany the female image was being appropriated as an icon in both German sectors, although this was not a new phenomenon, rather part of a broader long-term preoccupation. Pictures of Madonnas and mothers, often with sons, were a regular feature in magazines, newspapers and election posters in the early postwar years.¹²² The Madonna icon was shown as a symbol of peace and love and was accompanied by commentaries that exalted her commendable ability to deal with pain. Feminine images were thus used to represent the loss and anguish of the nation that had been engendered by

¹²² Denman, Mariatte C., 'Visualising the Nation: Madonnas and Mourning Mothers in Postwar Germany' in *Gender and Germanness: Cultural Productions of Nation* ed. by Patricia Herminhouse and Magda Mueller (Providence: Berghahn, 1997), pp. 189-201 (p. 194).

war.¹²³ Additionally the mother figure portrayed a sense of family and community imbued with traditional values of hearth and home, in effect a *Heimat* that had not been tarnished with the crimes of the sullied nation. Mariatte C. Denman discusses how the work of Käthe Kollwitz, whose art frequently featured mothers, was regarded as not just exemplifying a mother's suffering, but also that of the people.¹²⁴ A pertinent example of Kollwitz's work is her *Mutter mit totem Sohn* bronze figure that was appropriated for national commemoration, enlarged to four times its original size, and placed in the *Neue Wache* on Unter den Linden in Berlin in 1993.¹²⁵ Erected under Chancellor Kohl's government as part of efforts to rehabilitate the nation, the monument was disputed, as it appeared to place German victims on a level with Jewish victims, with its dedication to all victims of war and terror.¹²⁶ As a committed Communist it is also likely that Kollwitz herself would not have been comfortable with the use of her sculpture in this way, though Kohl had perhaps hoped that her politics and the maternal image would be something of a shield against controversy.

Barbara Kosta points out the persistent troping of both nation and *Heimat* as female, whose boundaries are invariably in danger of being violated and thus require male defence.¹²⁷ Yet although *Heimat* may be traditionally classified as female, the female may not necessarily be portrayed as passive in nature. The colossal sculpture *The Motherland* that stands 85

¹²³ Ibid., p. 195.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Wenk, Silke, 'Die Mutter in der Mitte Berlins: Strategien der Rekonstruktion eines Hauptstadtzentrums' in *Kein Land in Sicht: Heimat – weiblich?* ed. by Gisela Ecker (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1997), pp. 33-55 (p. 33).

¹²⁶ Niven, *Germans as Victims*, p. 5.

¹²⁷ Kosta, Barbara, 'Rape, Nation and Remembering History: Helke Sander's "Liberators take Liberties"', in *Gender and Germanness: Cultural Productions of Nation* ed. by Patricia Herminhouse and Magda Mueller (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), pp. 217-31 (p. 221).

metres high at Volgograd, and which commemorates the battle of Stalingrad, shows a gigantic mother, arms outstretched, in her right hand a sword raised in action, calling her sons to defend the homeland.¹²⁸ Carved stone blocks at the Soviet war memorial at Treptower Park, Berlin, depict women as both activists holding weapons and as weeping victims.

Female figures have been used in monuments for centuries, for example, as representing the nation like Marianne, the figure of the French Republic and the vast Statue of Liberty exemplifying freedom and democracy in New York. Marina Warner comments that in these cases the art illustrates the difference between the symbolic order and the established order by depicting 'the unlikelihood of women practising the concepts they represent'.¹²⁹ Women bear the burden of representation of the nation but are excluded from certain civil institutions. Warner notes the allegorical use of the female form and how meanings of all kinds flow through the figures of women, which are discerned variably through the eyes of the observer.¹³⁰ In Germany the aesthetics of the Germania figure, used to represent the nation, has shifted over time. Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries one can see Germania becoming more or less bellicose or vulnerable or contemplative depending on the historical moment, an effect also noticeable in expellee monuments. Several Germania statues were erected in the nineteenth century to honour the nation, for instance the gigantic *Niederwald* monument at Rudesheim, which commemorates the founding of the German Empire in 1871. The *Bismarck-Denkmal* in the Berlin *Tiergarten* includes a Germania

¹²⁸ Warner, Marina, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Picador, 1987), illustration after p. 73.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. xx.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 331.

figure and Philipp Veit's painting of Germania was produced as a national allegory in 1848, showing her with the German flag, eagle on her breast-plate and sword in hand. Often depicted as a warrior the image is softened by the woman's flowing garments and often some natural attribute like a crown of laurel leaves, or as in the case of Veit's painting, the sword is entwined with hemp twigs. Germania therefore conveys a figure which simultaneously offers protection but also, at times, requires it.

Elizabeth Heinemann discusses how, in early postwar West Germany, women's history was appropriated to represent the nation as a whole.¹³¹ On the one hand, women as the customary home-front victims of air raids came to represent universal German victimhood, and rape victims became analogous with the German nation as an innocent victim of war, although ironically in both East and West Germany talk of the rapes was muted, if not subject to various taboos, political in the GDR, patriarchal in all cases.¹³² In East Germany the role of the Red Army was repressed in both public and private discussion, and in patriarchal West Germany the topic was suppressed as too humiliating for men to bear and too risky for women who feared the reactions of their menfolk.¹³³ On the other hand, the *Trümmerfrauen* were seen as heroic agents and became a symbol of postwar resilience and reconstruction. Of course, in reality women's lives were not so clear-cut as these myths: many thousands of women were involved in National Socialist

¹³¹ Heinemann, Elizabeth, 'The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's "Crisis Years" and West German National Identity', *The American Historical Review*, 101 (1996), 354-95.

¹³² Between March and September 1945 around 1.9 million women were raped in the German territories and many were repeatedly raped, by different men and on more than one occasion. Liebman, Stuart and Annette Michelson, 'After the Fall: Women in the House of the Hangmen', *October*, (1995), 4-14 (p. 9).

¹³³ Grossmann, Atina, 'A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers', *October*, (1995), 42-63 (p. 61).

organisations, if not necessarily involved in criminal activities and overwhelmingly women supported the regime.¹³⁴ Additionally, as Heinemann comments, the image of the woman was not always positively portrayed; fraternisers with the Allies were generally reviled.¹³⁵ The traditional role of women had changed in the war years. Women had taken charge while men were absent fighting and indeed were the ones who primarily had to organise both the treks westward and early life in the new *Heimat*. They did not, on the whole, welcome a postwar return to subservience; however, a rebirth of ‘family’ values in the *Wirtschaftswunder* years contributed to the extolling of the virtues of the housewife and a return to an older familial order.¹³⁶ Rhetorically, at least, the woman was once more cast in the role of representing the unsullied *Heimat* as the core feature of the nation, as both East and West Germany strove to build up new postwar collective identities.

In the context of the widespread postwar preoccupation with casting women as representing the suffering of the nation, I accordingly examine four cases where the female form is used in expellee memorialisation. The twenty or so expellee monuments that use female figures often display family groupings, mostly depicted as if on a trek, but I have deliberately selected individual female figures, or a mother and child, as I am interested in what message is being conveyed by this less obvious figuration. The monuments are taken from different decades and from both West and east Germany.

¹³⁴ Heinemann, p. 360.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 380.

¹³⁶ Frevert, Ute, *Women in German History: from Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation*, (Oxford: Berg, 1989), p. 263-66.

5.2.1 *Mutter Osten*, Flintbek Cemetery near Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, 1952

The stone figure of an old woman wearing a headscarf stands in Flintbek cemetery with her head bowed in an apparent gesture of humility. Her eyes are lowered and her hands clasped as if in prayer. She stands on a stone plinth around which are displayed coats of arms from the lost lands (Figure 33). The population of Schleswig-Holstein almost doubled postwar. A third of the refugees came from the latitudinally-aligned East Prussia, a third from similarly positioned East Pomerania and the rest were made up from other eastern territories.¹³⁷



Figure 33. Flintbek, *Mutter Osten*

The monument was sculpted by Friedrich Klose and erected on 26 October 1952. The front of the plinth is inscribed 'Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet. Wir gedenken unserer teuren Toten in der ostdeutschen

¹³⁷ Lange, Ulrich (ed.), *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1996), p. 164.

Heimat'. The religious quotation (the first sentence is Isaiah 66:13), and cemetery location is fairly typical of this period; the 1950s was a time when Christianity and Christian iconography played a role in sustaining the postwar suffering nation. Moreover at its dedication deputy chairperson Ranocha spoke of the 'unendliche Leid der Vertriebenen von 1945' and metaphorically described this time as the 'Ostdeutsche Passion'.¹³⁸ Additionally, this particular scripture from the prophet Isaiah on the inscription continues in a somewhat bellicose tone that could well have suited certain expellees, as it seems to bear allusion to God fighting on their side and offering revenge for an undeserved wrong, perhaps also with hints of a Messiah to come. The quotation on the plinth could be read as a reference to the infant Jesus comforting the observer, as his mother comforted him, or that the mother is comforting the observer for the loss of the *Heimat* and the dead of the homeland. Depicted as the focus of the monument there is here more emphasis on the mother as comforter, personifying the *Heimat*. Indeed, chairperson Knaak commented at the inaugural ceremony that the memorial would in the future provide 'ein Stück Heimat'.¹³⁹ Her humble figure is unmistakably positioned as a victim; she radiates abject sorrow and conveys a notion of loss, while the inscription offers some hope for the future, perhaps the possibility of return.

5.2.2 Berlin Christus Cemetery, assume 1960s

The Berlin Christus cemetery on Mariendorferdamm lies in what was the American sector of the city. Here, a somewhat weathered stone figure of a

¹³⁸ 'Ein Ehrenmal in Flintbek', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 27 October 1952, p. 4.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

young mother cradling a baby, a Madonna and child representation, sits before a field of thirty-four tiny green tags, each of which depict the name, birth date and date of death of a refugee (Figures 34 and 35).



Figure 34. Berlin Christus-Cemetery



Figure 35. Cemetery tags

The deaths date between 1958 and 1962. To the side of the *Flüchtlingsfeld* are fourteen slightly larger black tags, depicting First or Second World War victims. In the same field is a grave of a Silesian pastor and his wife, dating from 1978. On the stone plinth on which the mother rests, is the partially obliterated, weathered remains of the same quotation from the bible as the Kiel example: ‘Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet’, however, the effect is different. The memorial is more overtly gendered than the Kiel one with more focus on the future. In this case the young mother and infant Jesus console and watch over the victims who lie at rest far from their *Heimat*. It seems likely that the monument stems from the 1960s, because of the tag dates, and at a time when recognition was dawning that there would be no return to the old homeland the female figure also acts as an embodiment of

the *Heimat* and in acknowledgement of its loss.¹⁴⁰ Her demeanour is peaceful and caring and she sits surrounded by nature, in a small, hedged area with a border of colourful flowers at her feet. The bordering of expellee monuments with vibrant foliage is not unusual, perhaps an attempt to delineate a substitute *Heimat* space which contrives to be as full of natural beauty as in the imagined *Heimat* of the mind.

5.2.3 Erfurt Cemetery, Thuringia, 1994

The central monument for the victims of flight and expulsion of the *BdV-Landesverbandes* Thuringia was erected in a prominent position in Erfurt main cemetery on the occasion of the second East German *Kulturtag* on 5 May 1994.¹⁴¹ The first expellee club to be constituted in east Germany was in Thuringia in November 1990.¹⁴² By January 1994 the organisation had 75,000 members in thirty-two *Kreisverbänden*.¹⁴³

This is a curious monument. The striking three metre high sandstone column shows somewhat indistinctly a relief of a female (the face of an old lady, perhaps a matriarch), and a trek on the flight westwards (Figures 36 and 37). Here is a mere trace of femininity and vulnerability, subordinate to a larger political statement. The column is raised up and bordered somewhat heraldically by geographical markers, the coats of arms, making it

¹⁴⁰ A 1967 poll showed 60% of West Germans thought the lands were now irretrievably lost, increasing to 70% by 1969. Ahonen, p. 224.

¹⁴¹ Erfurt had 38,969 expellees on 31 December 1948. StA Weimar, Akte 3665.

¹⁴² Salzborn, *Grenzenlose*, p. 74.

¹⁴³ From *Der Vertriebene*, January 1994. StA Erfurt, E 3551 d/1. An article in the magazine conveys the need for clubs in the new federal states to have the same rights as those in the old ones.

unapproachable, yet this arrangement also marks it out as a community of legitimacy.¹⁴⁴



Figure 36. Erfurt Cemetery



Figure 37. Erfurt close-up

This monument is atypical of east German memorials: firstly it lies in a highly visible location, frequently east German monuments are less prominent than their west German counterparts. Secondly it uses symbolic imagery, a feature again more often seen in west German monuments and thirdly it bears a slightly revanchist theme via its inscription ‘Vertreibung ist Unrecht. Die Heimat bleibt unvergessen’, which echoes the heightened political identity evident in local *Landesverband* literature.¹⁴⁵ However, the memorial is used in a way that is common in east German memorialisation, namely influenced by the reconciliatory cultural memory of the present, in this case grounded

¹⁴⁴ Stone-mason Erik-Arne Schiecke designed the monument, won in competition, and the firm Strassacker from Ulm developed the metal design of coats of arms which encircle it. From *Der Vertriebene*, October 2002.

¹⁴⁵ The monthly magazine *Der Vertriebene* produced by the BdV-Thuringia expresses a variety of views important to expellees. The November 2002 edition, for example, features an article about the annual ceremony at the monument where ‘Vertriebene- und Bekenntnisgenerationen’ gather ‘um an dieser Stelle an das den Deutschen angetane Unrecht zu mahnen’, p. 2.

within a European context. Every year on 5th May, Europe Day, a gathering of dignitaries and expellees takes place to remember the expulsions and commemorate the dead. Normally such ceremonies take place on *Volkstrauertag* in November. Although the event is an attempt at conciliation, the theme of the monument is altogether more specific, symptomatic of the competing tendencies regarding expellee commemoration. At the 5 May 2010 event Jörg Geibert, the State Secretary of the Thuringian Home Office spoke of the symbolic power demonstrated by such a reconciliatory occasion. He firstly made it clear that Germans had a particular responsibility to remember the victims of National Socialism, before proceeding with the ceremony to honour expellee victims. He stressed that the expulsion was a crime, but there was no doubt it came as a result of German aggression. He continued:

Wir müssen deutlich machen, dass es in Deutschland keine anerkannte politische Kraft gibt, die die Geschichte umschreiben will. Es besteht kein Zweifel, dass die Ursache der Flucht und Vertreibung das nationalsozialistische Regime und der von Deutschland begonnene Zweite Weltkrieg war. Jede Diskussion um materielle Entschädigung geht am Kern der Sache vorbei. Die Erinnerung an das menschliche Leid wach zu halten, der Appell, solches Leid nie mehr zuzufügen – das ist das Entscheidende. Dabei ist die erste Voraussetzung, sowohl mit unseren Nachbarn als auch der jungen Generation zu reden und ein gemeinsames Bewusstsein für dieses Thema zu entwickeln.¹⁴⁶

The Thuringian BdV operates within such a reconciliatory framework where funding permits an office in Erfurt of five ‘independent’ workers who are keen to have a pro-European focus and who spend much time in Polish schools lecturing about German culture.¹⁴⁷ ‘Didaktisches Lehrmaterial [...] für Schulen in Schlesien/Slask’ is a pamphlet used in teaching which contains information about significant German artists and authors like Oskar Moll and

¹⁴⁶ Speech from BdV club files.

¹⁴⁷ Interview, Schütz. Material from BdV club files.

Gerhart Hauptmann. 'Wege zu unseren östlichen Nachbarn. Licht und Schatten an der via Regia', is a workbook for Polish youngsters that details elements of Germany and Poland's histories, including aspects of Germany's National Socialist past. The work is undoubtedly well intentioned, but the material, however, is sometimes flawed. The workbook 'Strassen die verbinden. Europa und die Deutschen' for instance, contains pictures and description of Germany's former territories that present a very partisan view of the past and highlight Germany's age-old contributions to the regions. Nazi crimes are mostly elided or illustrated by unscripted miniature images of military operations.

Returning to the memorial, the first part of the dedication 'Vertreibung ist Unrecht' could be taken to be a universal comment but the latter part is explicitly German with emphasis on '*Die Heimat*'. The well-contextualised political speech of 2010 was not always the case. At the monument's unveiling on 5 May 1994 Paul Latussek, the chairperson of the *Landesverband* Thuringia hoped, 'dass dieser Gedenkstein die Jugend dieser Stadt und dieses Landes zum Nachdenken bringt und, dass junge Menschen angeregt werden, sich der geschichtlichen Wahrheit zu stellen',¹⁴⁸ implying that so far this had not happened. The 3rd *Ostdeutsche Kulturtage* of the *Landesverband Thüringen* in 1995 had, as an accompaniment, a 35-page booklet, containing an introduction by Latussek who refers to the expulsion as the biggest crime of the post-war years and cites a figure of eighteen million expellees. He states further that despite the forty years of suppression of expellee identity, memories of the culture of the old *Heimat* live on in

¹⁴⁸ StA Erfurt, E3551 d/1, *Der Vertriebene*, July 1994, p. 5.

everyday life and are expressed in the annual month-long festival for expellees. Latussek believes it is a duty to portray the ‘truth’ of the expulsions through commemorative ceremonies like the annual wreath-laying at the monument.¹⁴⁹ His approach is problematic; the ‘truth’ of which Latussek speaks is clearly a particular historical and political perspective and has been widely disputed. The figure of eighteen million expellees, for example, is not supported by key sources and is a clear attempt at a revisionist reading of the expulsions.¹⁵⁰

The face of the woman in the Erfurt monument is evidently suffering, shaped to convey the victim-oriented sentiment of the monument and used symbolically to reinforce the notion of *Heimat* loss. However, the individual is subordinate to the collective; the inscription is a bombastic proclamation. In contrast to the peaceful Berlin Madonna who invokes compassion, this female figure is a mere nod to iconography. There are some parallels to early West German memorialisation, whereby commemoration centred on expellee suffering, both physical and psychological, and the majority of the population viewed the expulsions as unjust. The existence of the public East German taboo had the effect of delaying the development of expellee commemorative discourse by forty years. Unlike the ambiguity seen in east German monuments elsewhere where inscriptions concentrate on a general sense of victimhood, with a broad focus on victims, expulsion and terror, although always German victims, the viewpoint expressed here is firmly that of

¹⁴⁹ StA Weimar, Booklet, 3. Ostdeutsche Kulturtage.

¹⁵⁰ Latussek has now been replaced as chairperson by the more moderate CDU politician Egon Primas. The Erfurt expellee club is noted as liberal in political orientation although it is recognised that there are factions within Thuringian clubs that are revanchist in tendency. The police presence at the 5 May 2011 ceremony is a reflection of this; there have been disturbances at past ceremonies by left-oriented people who consider that expellees want to relativise the question of guilt and believe that ‘deutsche Täter können keine Opfer sein’. Interview, Schütz.

expellees as victims. However, such positions are also occasionally seen in recent West German commemoration like the monument at Schwabhausen erected in 2004 in Bavaria, uncharacteristically for its time in the form of a crucifix. Its inscription reads: ‘Heimatrecht ist Menschenrecht. Vertreibung ist Unrecht’ followed by details of the origins of the expellees. It concludes: ‘Über 16 Mill. Vertriebene. Über 2,5 Mill. Opfer. Vertreibungsverbrechen und Völkermord kennen kein Vergessen!’. The use of the noun *Völkermord* immediately recalls the genocide of the Holocaust and used in this way suggests comparison, thereby emphasising comparative suffering, although the intention may have been to contextualise the expulsions and acknowledge Nazi crimes. Although not unique in its sentiment, West German monuments of this period generally place less emphasis on expellee victimhood such as the 1992 and 2006 monuments in Bad Bayersoien and Lauf, which thank the new *Heimat* for assistance given to expellees.¹⁵¹

5.2.4 Landshut, Podewilsstraße, Bavaria, 2001

My last and most recent example is from Landshut, Bavaria, where the female form is used not to depict a victim, rather to portray a strong young woman who is an active agent. The theme of this monument is to commemorate specific victims: the *Banater Schwaben* from Romania who were forcibly deported to Russia and also those who had to flee or were expelled to Germany. Sculpted by Banater artist Walter Andreas Kirchner the sculpture is located in a highly visible position in a green area in the town centre, on the

¹⁵¹ Also see the 2004 monument in Dinkelsbühl inscribed: ‘Heimatkreis Mies-Pilsen geborgen in Dinkelsbühl. 50 Jahre Patenschaft’.

approach to the old town.¹⁵² It was unveiled as part of the 11th *Kultur- und Heimattage der Banater Schwaben in Bayern*, held under the motto ‘Banater Schwaben unterwegs. Länder – Völker – Zeiten’ on 22-23 June 2001. At the same time eight monuments were unveiled in various towns in Romania to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the deportations (1951-56) as well as the opening of a *Deportierten-Haus* at the *Banater Dorfmuseum im Temeswarer Jagwald*.¹⁵³ The town council gave grudging approval for the monument. FDP councillor Bernd Engelhardt explained:

dass es sich nicht um ein städtisches Denkmal handele. Die Banater Schwaben haben die Finanzierung selbst übernommen. Eine Ablehnung des Werkes sei schon deshalb kaum möglich. Und ‘über Kunst lässt sich diskutieren’, sagt er. Dennoch sei man sich im Senat weitgehend einig darüber gewesen, dass es sich nicht um ein erstrangiges Kunstwerk handele.¹⁵⁴



Figure 38. Landshut *Frau*

¹⁵² Wichland, Horst, ‘Eindrucksvolle Gedenkfeiern im Banat und im Baragan’, *Banater Post*, 10 July 2001, pp. 1 and 4.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Denkmal der Erlebnissgeneration: Kultur- und Heimattage der Banater Schwaben in Bayern’, *Landshuter Zeitung*, 20 June 2001, p. 26.

The form of the stone memorial is that of a young woman, baby in arms, striding confidently forward (Figure 38). Her head is held high and she is flanked by two wing-like columns giving her the appearance of an angel in the manner of Nike, the goddess of victory.¹⁵⁵ The fronts of the two wings are engraved with images of suffering people on the trek or being deported. The sculpture on one level portrays a young mother on the trek, yet it can also be read as having a series of allegorical meanings. From the side of the sculpture one sees how quickly she is moving; her hair and clothes flow behind her creating a sense of swift forward movement, not in haste but in deliberation. The image has strength and formidable dignity on a human scale with a sense of identity and pride. The woman strides forward in complete contrast to the Berlin Madonna, emerging out of images of suffering on the trek with none of the sense of humility or deference of the 1950s/60s female figure, the gender iconography therefore has slightly shifted.

The monument is characterised as ‘Wider das Vergessen’ a title reminiscent of a slogan for action, and the self-possessed young woman is taking charge of ensuring that the past is indeed not forgotten. Like the word *Völkermord* discussed earlier, ‘Wider das Vergessen’ is also rhetoric appropriated from Holocaust commemorative discourses. Warner notes that the very name angel means messenger, and the chosen form of this monument indeed carries a powerful message.¹⁵⁶ On the monument’s left wing is written ‘1945 Deportation zur Zwangsarbeit in die Soviet Union’ followed by specific places in Russia. Although used here in a specific context, the monument also

¹⁵⁵ Other examples include the 1857 sculpture of August Wredow, ‘Nike trägt den gefallenen Krieger zum Olymp’ on the *Schloßbrücke* in Berlin, Wenk, pp. 33-55 (p. 43); Victoria, the angel statue atop the *Siegesäule* in Berlin; or Munich’s *Friedensengel* marking the 1871 Treaty of Versailles.

¹⁵⁶ Warner, p. 139.

alludes to the rhetoric of ethnic cleansing: certain expellee factions deployed discourses that emerged from the context of the mid-1990s' Balkan Wars to lend legitimacy to their cause and undoubtedly ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia did result in a later wave of public sympathy for ethnic German expellees as I noted in Chapter Two. On the reverse of the right wing is written '1951 Baragan – Deportation' and the relevant places of deportation, underneath which is inscribed “‘Wir Heimatvertriebene verzichten auf Rache und Vergeltung’ (Charta der Heimatvertrieben). Errichtet von den Banater Schwaben zur Erinnerung an Ihren Schicksalsweg im 20. Jahrhundert in Dankbarkeit für die Aufnahme in Deutschland’. The reference to the Charter that expellees will not demand revenge and retaliation or recompense implies that expellees deserve this but are denying it for some greater good, even perhaps faintly hinting that some Holocaust victims did receive reparation, and expellees are therefore asserting a kind of moral authority. But here the reference is meant humbly, overtly at least, and suggests that the expellees are grateful for their reception in the new *Heimat*.

As if to emphasise a happy ending, at the rear of the monument, in hollowed out form and behind the woman is shown an embracing couple, a woman folded in a more traditional pose in a man's arms, conveying a sense of safety and security in the new *Heimat*. The female figure can therefore be active but ultimately what is desirable is a traditional gender structure that sees the man protecting the woman, on the lines of classic *Heimat* gender discourse.

So what conclusions can be drawn from the four monuments? To use Young's term, 'collected memory' is in evidence here, whereby the messages

conveyed in a monument reflect the collation of the many, often disputed individual memories of its initiators as well as the political and sociological context of the historical moment.¹⁵⁷ Returning to an earlier point, female figures are used to convey a variety of meanings and these meanings can be variably interpreted. We have seen the humble old lady in Flintbek, the peaceful Berlin Madonna, the almost hidden matriarch in Erfurt and the angelic and self-possessed young woman in Landshut. My four examples are clearly dissimilar, erected in different time periods and regions. Despite the differences I argue that there is a consistent function, which links undeniably to the role of women in *Heimat* discourse, as those charged with preserving continuity. The female figure, particularly those portrayed as mother or matriarch, with their association as keeper of the *Heimat*, invariably stands as a symbol to the lost homeland. Her metaphorical form embodies *Heimat* values and is intended to convey steadfastness of memory, which will keep the spiritual *Heimat* alive in the way that tradition indicates the woman maintains the physical *Heimat*.

6. Cultural Memory and Monuments

In summary, in this chapter I have shown how West German expellee monuments have developed in purpose and form over the years. Early revanchist motivations have declined but evidence of this inclination has not entirely disappeared, although I maintain that in most instances, particularly in later discourse the word *Heimat* does not refer to territory but rather to an imaginary construct. I also discussed how in later years some monuments

¹⁵⁷ Young, p. xi.

have been removed, locations changed, dedications amended and new memorials erected. Symbolism has enhanced the message of the memorialisation by drawing more attention to the monuments and embodying a deeper meaning.

East German memorialisation permitted only after the *Wende* is different from west German. East German expellees were clearly motivated to commemorate as soon as they were able to, influenced by the memory of their experiences which has been refreshed throughout forty years of GDR life, and the contemporary socio-political context. The *Heimat* in the mind had to suffer a 'memory loss' of forty years while the memory discourse has been through various stages of perceived empathy towards expellee suffering. Compared to west Germany, east German monuments generally lack ornamentation and inscriptions that are used to convey a sense of *Heimat* loss and a pride in the old homeland. Instead the dedications tend to encompass a broader span of victims, rather than focusing exclusively on expellees as in west German examples. Moreover, the memory culture has resulted in their deliberate placement in areas where they are less visible, and peripheral locations are sometimes preferred as defacement there by people who find the commemoration of German victims unacceptable is less likely.

In West Germany a commemorative discourse developed from 1947 until 1990 and beyond. Unification, the Balkan Wars and the impetus caused by the dying-out of the expellee generation have generated a wave of commemoration in both parts of the country from the 1990s. However, east German memorialisation is shaped by the need to negotiate several factors: the historical experience and legacy of the commemorative practice of the old

GDR comprising the ban on commemorating the old *Heimat*; the cultural tradition that upheld the socialist *Heimat*, and the practice of commemorating German victims of the Western Allies, such as those killed in the air raids on Dresden. Furthermore, the specific timing of expellee commemoration in the east necessarily means that east German commemoration is coloured by west German memorial orthodoxy. This is a clear case of the normative force of cultural memory. The shifts in west German commemorative culture have reshaped the discussion about German victims which makes memorialisation more acceptable when contextualised within a frame of German perpetration, or within a spectrum of wider suffering. Particularly since unification, public discussion has been set in and by the west in line with the rethinking of German perpetration, thus setting the framework in which east German memorialisation takes place.

In conclusion, I have shown how expellees erected memorials for three key purposes: to influence how the expulsion and loss of the old *Heimat* is codified in official historical consciousness; to support expellee identity during the integration process as a cultural defence against the locals (most evidenced in West German commemoration); and to engender public acknowledgment of their suffering. Overall, memorialisation demonstrates that the old *Heimat* is a core component of expellee identity. Although the word *Heimat* appears less frequently in east German commemoration, the speed at which expellee associations were founded and flourished after the *Wende* shows the importance of the old *Heimat* for expellees, even after forty years of suppressed public discussion. I have demonstrated how the social-political climate influenced commemoration; not just in the timing and form

of memorials, but also in the way that some West German monuments changed in form or were relocated. Additionally the framing of commemorative practices over the years such as speeches held at memorials on anniversary occasions reflects the specific socio-political context. Nevertheless, as I have noted, private memory can sometimes be in conflict with public memory. For instance, despite the public claims of successful integration in the 1950s expellees have shown a long-term commitment to deploy monuments which demonstrate their distinctive culture as opposed to that of the locals, to reinforce that part of their identity. Moreover, while monument erection was less energetic from the mid-1950s and particularly from the 1960s to the mid-1980s (other than key anniversaries) when public discussion of German suffering was muted, memorials were often more striking in appearance as if to offset the official memory culture. From the mid-1980s cultural memory began to consider German victimhood again, as well as German perpetration, and coupled with the fortieth anniversary of the expulsions the socio-political climate thus encouraged more expellee memorialisation. At this time greater academic interest was applied to questioning the success of expellee integration; from the mid-1990s narratives about German suffering came to the forefront of cultural memory and from 1992 east German commemoration commenced. It should, of course, be noted that my analysis of monuments concerns just four federal states. A full nationwide analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis; however it would be extremely interesting to see if the pattern identified in my study applies on a national scale.

CHAPTER 4: THE LOST HEIMAT IN HEIMATSTUBEN AND OSTDEUTSCHE MUSEUMS

Whereas the previous chapter discussed monuments that were often invested with *Heimat* symbols to commemorate the past, this chapter is concerned with the effort to present an ‘authentic’ historical narrative of the old *Heimat* and the expulsions in *Heimat* museums: both amateur *Heimatstuben* and professional *Ostdeutsche* museums. Fundamental to such efforts are tangible artefacts from the old *Heimat*, retained as souvenirs in the home, donated to museums, or kept as collections in *Heimatstuben*.

Heimatstuben and *Ostdeutsche* museums display objects in a mosaic of memorabilia to convey a sense of the former German territories, the lost *Heimat*. These institutions derive from the concept of *Heimat* museums, which sprang into existence from around 1900.¹ Containing a variety of often disordered and diverse exhibits from the realms of religion, natural history, everyday life, industry or popular art, *Heimat* museums were mostly founded privately and run by amateurs, often teachers. They were created ‘von Non-Professionals für “kleine Leute”’.² Emphasis was laid on

comprehensive, folkloric history [...] not the king but the people, not the state but the land itself. Moreover the *Heimat* museum encouraged a patriotic enthusiasm that began at the source, at the *Heimat*, and grew from there to include every man, without regard to class or profession.³

Andreas Grote’s foreword to Martin Roth’s study of *Heimat* museums indicates that such a museum ‘vermittelt [...] der örtlichen Bevölkerung das Gefühl der Identität mit ihrem Gemeinwesen und ihrer Region, es vermittelt aber auch dem durchreisenden Gast Information zu der Region, in welcher er

¹ Roth, Martin, *Heimatmuseum: Zur Geschichte einer deutschen Institution* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1990), p. 30. 371 *Heimat* museums were founded across Germany between 1890 and 1918. Confino, p. 35.

² Roth, p. 30.

³ Applegate, pp. 95-96.

sich gerade befindet [...]’.⁴ The intention was not merely to represent localities but additionally to signify the whole nation.⁵ Roth shows how the *Heimatismuseumbewegung* of the 1920s was ‘eine Zeit, in der die Museen für die Produktion und Verbreitung eines staatskonformen, patriotischen Bewußtseins instrumentalisiert wurden’, a consciousness that was developed in the 1930s under National Socialism: *Heimat* museums of both the 1920s and 1930s contained ‘einen politischen ideologischen Kern’,⁶ although clearly the political ideology differed considerably in the two decades. Within this context my study investigates what could be considered *Heimat* museums, albeit with a twist. *Ostdeutsche* museums were established post-1945 to encourage identification with, and promote the culture of, the *lost Heimat*, namely the region that is *not* based around the locality of the *Heimat* museum. The *Heimat* movement in Wilhelmine Germany developed in response to the perceived threat of modernisation. *Heimat* associations worked to cultivate and preserve the locality in the belief that harmony would reign between the people and the environment, thus the *Heimat* became a place of emotional identification. My thesis shows how a similar ethos operates in *Heimatstuben* and *Ostdeutsche* museums to preserve the culture of the old *Heimat* against the realities of the present day, albeit necessarily far away from the territorial *Heimat*.

My study highlights the challenges inherent in representing Germany’s difficult past. This chapter demonstrates that while potentially of benefit, the involvement of eyewitnesses in museal presentations can result sometimes in politically problematic presentations of the past, although clearly

⁴ Roth, p. 9.

⁵ Confino, p. 43.

⁶ Roth, p. 12.

professionally run museums can also present the past in a problematic manner. Expellees see themselves as victims of the expulsions yet they were part of a nation that practised genocidal expulsions and this context is often elided. Moreover the German East is often glorified in museal representations yet the people in the East voted overwhelmingly for National Socialism, a fact frequently omitted in such narratives.

My key interest in this chapter concerns how the involvement of eyewitnesses affects the portrayal of history and culture in amateur and professional museums, thus drawing on theories I discussed in Chapter Two to explore how memory is reshaped in the present time. In Section One I contrast the development of *Heimatstuben* and *Ostdeutsche* museums in postwar West and east Germany. Following this foundation, Section Two analyses three *Ostdeutsche* museums reading them with particular reference to Janet Marstine's four common and overlapping archetypes of museums that can be seen in contemporary culture. These are a shrine or sacred space; a market-driven industry where presentation is driven by commercial considerations; a colonizing space, where notions of imperialism and patriarchy may shape presented culture; and a post-museum, one which actively works with communities and visitors, engaging in critical study.⁷ Through examining three approaches to loss, flight and expulsion in museums at Lüneburg, Lower Saxony; Görlitz, Saxony; and Greifswald, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern I show that the patriotic consciousness evident in early *Heimat* museums is reflected more in the Lüneburg museum that was established twenty years earlier, and which has more expellee involvement than the two

⁷ For full details see Marstine, Janet, 'Introduction' in *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction* ed. by Janet Marstine (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 1-36 (pp. 9-21).

east German museums. Third, I analyse the use of art from the old eastern territories in the market-driven *Ostdeutsche Galerie*, Regensburg, Bavaria. Section Four contrasts two approaches in exhibitions regarding expellee integration: *Fremdes Zuhause* that ran from 30 May 2009 - 26 December 2010 in the professionally curated *Freilichtmuseum Molfsee*, near Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, and *Vertreibung und Integration* in the amateur-run *Heimatstube* in Gehren, Thuringia. Section Five compares how artefacts are used to sustain memories in *Heimatstuben* in east and west Germany: Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Altenburg, Saxony. Finally, I show how a hybrid monument and museum, *Der neue Altvaterturm* in Thuringia, framed as a European project and aiming for cross-border reconciliation in accordance with the cultural memory norms of the early twenty-first century, nevertheless focuses predominantly on German suffering.

In *Heimatstuben*, artefacts are used to recreate the old *Heimat* within the new one and I indicate differences between those in west and east Germany. *Heimatstuben* are rarely found in east Germany. In the years 1945-89 personal souvenirs of the old *Heimat* were mostly not retained by expellees in an atmosphere where the past was unable to be publicly discussed or cultivated. The few *Heimatstuben* that exist in east Germany are hybrid concerns where a small collection of exhibits from the old homeland, maps or coats of arms are displayed in a club's meeting rooms, rather than having an independent existence, as is usually the case in west Germany. Crucially, the exhibited artefacts are often reconstructed, and thereby embody a 'reconstituted' or replicated *Heimat*. By contrast west German *Heimatstuben* recreate a fantasy 'preserved' world of the old *Heimat* in a phantom-like existence. Often

mannequins wearing *Tracht* have pride of place, appearing as a ghostly presence or uncanny doll-like automata. The old *Heimat* is thus kept as 'undead' in a spectral-like existence.

It is useful at this point to distinguish between memorials and museums as examples of cultural memory. Museum exhibitions are less fixed than monuments; their displays, even permanent ones, are not designed to last. Nonetheless, due to their structure a developing narrative can unfold, rather than one event in time being captured as is more common in monuments. The audience is different; an observer can seek out a memorial or a monument can be viewed quite by chance. Museums seek to appeal to an audience, often tourists; they can generate income and have the ability to entertain, as well as inform. They are thus better able to preserve a notion of cultural identity by the use of description and display of artefacts, and also have the potential to work across boundaries, nationally, within Europe and internationally, although the work on restoration of monuments, graveyards and the erection of new memorials in the old *Heimat* by German expellees necessarily entails cooperative working across boundaries. However, my key argument is applicable to both forms, namely that memorialisation is influenced by the contemporary socio-political climate. For instance, the *Haus der Heimat*, a type of social centre for expellees and the first of its kind, was opened in Kiel on 28 January 1955 and celebratory rhetoric at its inauguration claimed that expellees were still yearning for *Wiedervereinigung*.⁸ Its foundation had been laid on 20 December 1953, labelled figuratively 'ein Stück Heimatboden'.⁹ The establishment's ongoing aim was 'zur Pflege unseren heimatlichen

⁸ StA Kiel. Mappe 8°, 75026/1968, 40 Jahre Haus der Heimat.

⁹ StA Kiel. Mappe 8°, 75026/1968, 30 Jahre Haus der Heimat.

kulturellen Güter, als Zuflucht für die, die des Rates bedürfen, als Stätte der Mahnung und Sammlung für unsere Jugend, als Bekenntnis unseres Willens, der deutschen Einheit zu dienen' and the house was also used for 'Wahrung des Ostdeutschen Kulturgutes' as well as 'heimatpolitische und sozialpolitische Arbeit'.¹⁰ The centre was thus not merely a place to preserve and celebrate the old culture, rather additionally to serve political purposes of campaigning for the return of the lost lands and for German unity. The institution thus reflected the political rhetoric of the 1950s. A similar concern, the *Pommernzentrum/Ostseeakademie*, was founded in 1988 in Lübeck-Travemünde as a multi-purpose centre and memorial site for expellees. At this later stage revanchist political activity is not observable in its activities. Its site includes a distance marker, a milestone which reads on one side 'Standort in der Heimat 1888-1945 wiedergefunden 1988', illustrating the replacement nature of *Heimat* memorialisation, typical of commemoration from the mid-1950s that I identified in Chapter Three. In this case it is also indicative of enduring cultural identification with the old *Heimat*, over forty years after the expulsion. A similar centre is now being planned for Reichenbach in the Oberlausitz by East German expellees in a belated effort to hold on to their cultural identity and heritage. Essentially different from monuments, *Heimatstuben* and *Ostdeutsche* museums cannot be inaugurated so swiftly, thus are not subject to such peaks of commemorative activity. Nevertheless, more *Heimatstuben* were formed in the early 1980s, potentially in response to the approaching fortieth anniversary of the expulsion, and also in the early 1990s due to a cultural memory landscape that favoured discussion of German

¹⁰ StA Kiel. Mappe 8°, 75026/1968, 20 Jahre Haus der Heimat.

victims. Furthermore, as a result of unification commemorative momentum gathered pace. Völkering's survey of eighty-seven exhibitions regarding flight, expulsion and integration dated between 1950 and 2009 reveals just twelve held up to 1984 and seventy-five held from 1985 to 2009, the majority of which took place in West Germany.¹¹ Völkering accounts for the increase by the general boom in museums since the end of the 1970s; the overlapping with anniversaries of the expulsion or new research regarding integration; and also by reflecting that since the 1990s Germany has become a home for many new immigrants, integration and migration have thus become widely discussed topics. All these are socio-political factors which I argue are the chief influences affecting the timing and shape of memorialisation.

Many *Heimatstuben* are linked to *Patenschaften*; the fifty-five *Patenschaften* founded in Schleswig-Holstein by 1961 noted in Chapter One, had increased to seventy by 1983.¹² By 1994 Schleswig-Holstein had thirty-three *Heimatstuben*: ten *Ostdeutsche*, sixteen Pomeranian, six East Prussian, and one West Prussian.¹³ Funding for these establishments came mostly from the 1953 West German *Bundesvertriebenengesetz* (BVFG) Paragraph 96:

Bund und Länder haben entsprechend ihrer durch das Grundgesetz gegebenen Zuständigkeit das Kulturgut der Vertreibungsgebiete in dem Bewußtsein der Vertriebenen und Flüchtlinge, des gesamten deutschen Volkes und des Auslandes zu erhalten, Archive, Museen und Bibliotheken zu sichern, zu ergänzen und auszuwerten sowie Einrichtungen des Kulturschaffens und der Ausbildung sicherzustellen und zu fördern.¹⁴

The aim of both *Patenschaften* and *Heimatstuben* was the same, to ensure the continuation of the old *Heimat* within the new one.

¹¹ Völkering, pp. 96-99.

¹² Schütze, p. 221.

¹³ Ibid., p. 220.

¹⁴ Hahn and Hahn, p. 519.

Following the establishment of *Heimatstuben*, *Ostdeutsche* museums representing specific regions were developed, the first being the *Ostpreußisches Landesmuseum* in Lüneburg in 1987, and they are still being founded.¹⁵ Post-Wende *Ostdeutsche* museums were founded in the former GDR. From 1998 the new SPD-Green government favoured the establishment of larger museums for specific ethnic groups, rather than small *Heimatstuben*. It wanted conservation of tradition and culture to be supplemented by cooperative activities with the Czech Republic, Poland and Russia,¹⁶ thus directing funding to larger, professional museums, which potentially amounts to an effort to present a more historically orthodox narrative, one designed by professional curators. Large sums have been involved in preserving the old culture. In 1998 23.6 million euros was spent by the Federal Government alone and although the SPD-Green coalition (1998-2005) reduced the funding it was later increased in 2009 under the Grand Coalition (2005-09) to a sum of around 17.8 million euros.¹⁷ It seems clear that not only expellees, but also governments of all political parties are keen to preserve the culture and identity of the old *Heimat*.

1. *Heimatstuben* and *Ostdeutsche* Museums

Many expellees brought *Heimat* memorabilia with them on the treks but official policy in the GDR dictated that commemoration of the old homeland should not take place. Informers may have reported on any display of *Heimat* artefacts, even within the confines of the home, and memorabilia therefore

¹⁵ For details see 'Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Maßnahmen', pp. 7-14.

¹⁶ Kift, Dagmar, 'Neither Here nor There? Memorialization of the Expulsion of Ethnic Germans' in *Memorialization in Germany since 1945* ed. by Niven and Paver, pp. 78-90 (p. 80).

¹⁷ Hahn and Hahn, p. 519.

remained out of the public eye until after the *Wende*. Conversely, expellees' homes in West Germany often contained traces of the old *Heimat* from the outset and continue to do so. A study of seventy expellee families living between Travemünde and Flensburg revealed that three families had their own *Heimatstube* within the home with more than fifteen exhibits; twenty-eight families had a *Heimatecke* with several *Heimatgegenstände*; and a further thirty-one families displayed single *Heimat* symbols in their homes.¹⁸

During my fieldwork I interviewed Martin and Katharina Hanek, Transylvanian Saxons from Baierdorf in Romania, who fled from the advancing Russians in September 1944, but unusually chose, and were allowed, to return to their village in 1945. At that point ethnic Romanians occupied their old home and the Haneks had to work for subsistence wages until they were permitted to leave in 1977 as so-called *Spätaussiedler*, when they resettled in Großweismannsdorf near Nürnberg. Their home in Bavaria is in parts a shrine to Baierdorf. The dining room has wall-tapestries that convey aspects of the old homeland with sentimental *Heimat* sayings. The small living room contains two glass vitrines displaying *Heimat* memorabilia including mannequins wearing *Tracht*. Additionally a huge model of the Haneks' old church occupies a substantial part of the living room.¹⁹ The Haneks' situation may not be typical but the use of artefacts for such memorialisation is widespread.

Heimatstuben first opened in the 1950s in West Germany when the early emergency resettlement phase had passed. Quarters were found, often by

¹⁸ Jeggle, Utz, 'Kaldaunen und Elche: Kulturelle Sicherungssysteme bei Heimatvertriebenen' in *Vertriebene in Deutschland: Interdisziplinäre Ergebnisse und Forschungsperspektiven* ed. by Dierck Hoffmann, Marita Krauss and Michael Schwartz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), pp. 395-407 (p. 406).

¹⁹ Interview, Martin and Katharine Hanek.

expellee societies, where the lost lands could be evoked by the mostly haphazard display of *Heimat* memorabilia. Early *Heimatstuben* bear resemblance to the *Wunderkammer* of the sixteenth to eighteenth century in that their disordered, unclassified collections embraced the notion that the whole cosmos could be controlled within one room or a cabinet, a ‘pre-programmable personal environment’.²⁰ In *Heimatstuben* the lost *Heimat* could coexist within the new one, a world within a world. *Wunderkammer* collections aimed to ‘inspire wonder and stimulate creative thought’ and often included unusual artefacts like ‘special mirrors and lenses capable of distorting reality’.²¹ Correspondingly the instinctive urge by some expellees to accumulate and display objects from the old homeland also distorts reality as the collections reflect a world now lost, suggesting a desperate sense of clinging on to the past.

Heimatstuben can also be classified as a type of memory theatre. Giulio Camillo’s sixteenth century memory theatre, which was larger than a small model, a wooden construction large enough to be entered by two people at once, was ‘divided into memory places on which are memory images’.²² Although Frances Yates’s study explores how memory theatres support individual mnemonic memory, *Heimatstuben* work similarly, in their case designed to sustain group memory and identity.

Objects from the old *Heimat* are frequently subjected to an emotional investment that borders on fetishism. Fetishism can be defined as ‘the removal of the object from its historical and cultural context and its

²⁰ Putnam, James, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), pp. 10-11.

²¹ Ibid., p. 10.

²² Yates, Frances A., *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 157.

redefinition in terms of the collector' and, when linked to psychoanalysis, as a 'strong, mostly eroticised attachment to a single object or category'.²³ One expellee, for instance, developed a fetish about the ice-skates utilised to flee across the frozen countryside. They became loved like a person and although eventually superfluous the expellee could not bear to throw them away. Thus they were later donated to a *Heimatmuseum* to symbolically depict the event.²⁴ Often found in *Heimatstuben*, photographs are another example of a fetish. Such objects were carried by people to remind them of loved ones, or to bring luck, or to ward off danger. Expellees frequently brought them on the trek for such purposes. Accordingly, 'the fetish [...] means both loss (symbolic castration) and protection against loss', photographs enabling fragments of the past to be preserved 'like flies in amber'.²⁵ Other typical *Heimatstuben* exhibits are coats of arms, emblems, pictures, playing cards, certificates, models, tools, household articles, kitchen and farming equipment and *Tracht*, mostly practical and portable objects kept without any classification by non-professional staff.²⁶ Beloved objects were thus uncoupled from their original function and used to illustrate the culture of the old region to other expellees or visitors. The new 'after-life' of such artefacts supported an identity perceived by expellees to be under threat, and eventually assumed a mythic status. Just as the notion of *Heimat* developed in response to modernity, so keepsakes from the old *Heimat* operated similarly.

²³ Windsor, John, 'Identity Parades' in *The Cultures of Collecting* ed. by John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion, 1994), pp. 49-67, p. 50 and Bal, Mieke, 'Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting' in *The Cultures of Collecting* ed. by Elsner and Cardinal, pp. 97-115 (p. 105).

²⁴ Jeggle, p. 404.

²⁵ Metz, Christian, 'Photography and Fetish' in *The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography* ed. by Carol Squiers (Seattle: Bay Press, 1990), pp. 155-64 (p. 158).

²⁶ Schütze, p. 224.

Expellees clung on to them like talismen in the early postwar years to juxtapose the comfortable, beloved pre-expulsion world against the new *Heimat* and the demands of a difficult new existence. Such symbols became almost ‘heimatlicher als die Heimat. [...] Die Sorge um das Nicht-Mehr-Erkantwerden, das Vergessenwerden, kann diese Hypertrophierung der Zeichen verständlich machen’.²⁷

Following the *Wende* and the founding of expellee associations in east Germany some *Heimatstuben* have been established, but they are few in number. An advertisement as part of my study in *Der Vertriebene*, the well-circulated expellee magazine, yielded no more *Heimatstuben* in Thuringia which is rich in expellee activity, than the three known by the BdV head office.²⁸ A joint project of the Christian-Albrechts University of Kiel and the *Bundesinstitut für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa* in Oldenburg, ongoing since July 2008, also state financed through Paragraph 96 of the BVFG, is documenting the *Heimat* collections in Germany, mindful that due to much lower visitor numbers and reduced funding such collections are in danger of being lost.²⁹ As the Oldenburg study recognises, *Heimatstuben* not only exhibit physical artefacts but also offer psychological support to visitors:

Die Heimatstuben und –sammlungen sind aber nicht nur Aufbewahrungs- und Ausstellungsorte. Sie sind oft über Jahrzehnte hinweg selbst zu Stätten der persönlichen und der gemeinsamen Erinnerung der Vertriebenen, Flüchtlinge und Aussiedler und – mehr noch – zu Orten der Begegnung, des Austauschs und des

²⁷ Fendl, p. 116.

²⁸ The *Der Vertriebene* title of the post-*Wende* magazine is noteworthy, an ironic sign of opposition to SED edicts that expellees had to be named *Umsiedler*.

²⁹ ‘Bundesinsitut für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa, Dokumentation der Heimatsammlungen in Deutschland’, <http://www.bkge.de/heimatsammlungen> [accessed 19 April 2011].

Gemeinschaftsgefühls geworden, an denen das sichtbare und unsichtbare Fluchtgepäck bewahrt und gepflegt wird.³⁰

In a 1994 study Manuela Schütze finds the visitors, as well as the staff, have a strong *Heimatgefühl*; their expellee identity is in no way diminished after fifty years. ‘An den Exponaten der Heimatstuben macht ein Großteil der vertriebenen Besucher “Heimat” fest. Sie identifizieren sich und ihre persönliche Geschichte mit diesen Symbolen von “Heimat”’.³¹ Additionally they offer the following generations a chance to view aspects of the homeland of their forefathers, potentially awaken interest and enable the passing on of family traditions.³²

Not all establishments can be neatly classified as either a *Heimatstube* or an *Ostdeutsche* museum. A hybrid example, the *Haus Hansestadt Danzig* in Lübeck, was founded in a seven hundred year old building in 1981/2 by the Danziger Förderkreis. Financed entirely by donations the museum is run voluntarily by an expellee, there is no professional curator and visitors pay no fee. Although the clear aim is to portray German life in Danzig pre-1945 (now Gdańsk) the exhibition is not overly partisan in the way that 1920s *Heimat* museums were, or revanchist, and indeed the museum works in partnership with an equivalent one in Gdańsk, the *Muzeum Historii Miasta*. Conciliatory work is also evidenced by pictures of present-day Gdańsk and a section on baroque furniture refers to it coming from Danzig ‘vor und nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg’. German suffering is not highlighted here, though some reference is made to expellees. There is a small section on ‘Schicksalsjahr 1945’ which includes pictures from the destroyed town, luggage taken on the treks, and

³⁰ Bundesinstitut für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa (ed.), *Was wird aus den Heimatsammlungen?* (Oldenburg, 2008), p. 7.

³¹ Schütze, p. 234.

³² Bundesinstitut, *Heimatsammlungen?* p. 13.

documents from this period, the *Notzeit*, as it is described. Three splendid bells hang in the garden with a comment that they are ‘ein Stück Heimat’ and that expellees were grateful to experience ‘den heimatlichen Klang ihrer Glocken’, thereby conveying a deeper meaning than merely to hear the sound of a bell ringing. Following their removal from Danzig in 1943, they hung until 2006 in the Lutherkirche in Lübeck.³³ Two of the bells are from the Heilig-Leichnam-Kirche in Danzig, at the side of which is a cemetery. As all German cemeteries were destroyed after 1945 a memorial was erected here in 2004 for the former German inhabitants inscribed: ‘Friedhof der nicht existierenden Friedhöfe’, in an interesting figuration of a monument to non-existing monuments. The bells now in Lübeck are intended as a ‘Brücke zur Heimat und den Bewohnern Danzigs sowie eine Mahnung und Erinnerung an künftige Generationen!’.

As well as documenting the *Heimatsammlungen* the aforementioned Oldenburg study is considering the future of *Heimattuben*. It notes that financial restrictions are forcing local councils to reconsider both the accommodation and any funding that have hitherto been provided to them, especially as expellee descendants often do not feel the same ties to them. The study claims that if solutions are not contemplated now, then last-minute decisions when faced with closures might not be the most appropriate and valuable collections may be lost. First an establishment should consider whether it functions ‘als Begegnungsstätte, als Museum, als Informationsstelle über die Vergangenheit oder über die Geschichte von Vertreibung und der Vertriebenen nach 1945’. There are then four

³³ The museum narrative panel notes that Lübeck received 90,000 expellees of whom 10,000 were from Danzig.

possibilities: the local council could take over the *Heimatstube* and integrate it into the local museum or other communal establishment; it could be incorporated into an existing *Ostdeutsches Museum* or institution; it could be fitted into a new central organisation; or most radically, it could be included in a museum, archive or library in the old *Heimat*.³⁴ The latter proposal sounds initially highly unlikely but is nowadays remarkably feasible, when one considers the amount of cooperative working underway at local levels between old and new inhabitants of the previous German territories. The third proposal could potentially include the SFVV Centre, the topic of Chapter Five. All these proposals would change the character of the collections. From being self-standing *Wunderkammer*, they would be sections within another establishment and the new framing would colour the understanding of the past. As the past is endlessly constructed in and by the present, change is inevitable and perhaps the next step is a more regularised, pedagogical one. As amateur-run *Heimatstuben* decline, professionally run *Ostdeutsche* museums are flourishing, a signal of communicative memory sliding into cultural memory alone and also a sign of full assimilation of expellees and their descendants in the new *Heimat*.

³⁴ Bundesinstitut, *Heimatsammlungen?* pp. 18-26.

2. Loss, Flight and Expulsion: Three Approaches in Museums at Lüneburg, Görlitz and Greifswald

Museums form so much a part of today's cultural landscape that they can frame our basic assumptions about the past.³⁵ All museums use framing: 'a metaphorical process that creates a vision of the past and future based on contemporary needs'.³⁶ Often museums in my study are contained in old buildings, the function of which is to act as a framework to convey the eastern German past to the visitor from the outset. This also helps to create an effect of authenticity. Framing techniques, which could be the architecture or indeed lighting design, audio headsets, or the museum café are used to provide a context that affects how visitors may perceive the past, interpreted within a contemporary mindset.³⁷

The dilemma of presenting history authentically and sensitively in a museum is a particular challenge when dealing with Germany's problematic past. The cities of Bonn and Berlin founded museums of history in the mid-1980s and those aligned to the political left were suspicious about 'history arranged from above'.³⁸ They saw that the:

depiction of German history in museums can also constitute an important aspect of the renationalisation of German identity since museums tend to fix national images and thus influence historical consciousness by presenting millions of visitors with particular visions and symbols of the national past.³⁹

Museums are not neutral spaces, nor do they speak with one authoritative voice; involved in the representations are many museum

³⁵ Marstine, p.1.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁸ Berger, *The Search*, p. 205.

³⁹ Ibid.

personnel, who make subjective decisions.⁴⁰ What results is, ‘a statement of position. It is a theory: a suggested way of seeing the world’.⁴¹ In the case of the Lüneburg museum around fifty volunteers work at the museum, many of whom are expellees on hand to relate events from their past, something which adds a strand of communicative memory, whether dependable or not, to the exhibition’s artefacts that illustrate cultural memory.⁴²

A modern history museum displays objects ‘with a view to rendering present and visible that which is absent and invisible: the past history of a particular people, nation, region or social group’.⁴³ Aesthetic elements as part of such an objectified culture can perform an important role in the power of persuasion; they carry ‘formale und performative Stimmigkeit und Überzeugungskraft’.⁴⁴ My three examples show how history can be variably portrayed undertaken by professional curators who understand the challenge of presenting culture which possesses normative power. Curators at the Lüneburg museum, for example, are always very concerned to make sure that the context with regard to the Third Reich is ‘sehr korrekt’; in Lower Saxony it is ‘immer eine heikle Frage’, according to the museum director.⁴⁵ As Peter Jones notes, even museums that have excellent and knowledgeable researchers acknowledge

the problems that arise from interpreting and presenting products rather than processes, effects rather than causes [...]. [Museums] necessarily

⁴⁰ Marstine, p. 2.

⁴¹ Macdonald, Sharon, ‘Introduction’ in *Theorizing Museums* ed. by Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 1-20 (p. 14).

⁴² Interview, Joachim Mähner, Museum Director.

⁴³ Bennett, Tony, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 166.

⁴⁴ Rüsen, Jörn and Friedrich Jaeger, ‘Erinnerungskultur’ in *Deutschland-Trendbuch: Fakten und Orientierungen* ed. by Karl-Rudolf Korte and Werner Weidenfeld (Opladen: Leske and Budrick, 2001), pp. 397-428 (p. 402).

⁴⁵ The Federal Government controls and evaluates the work at the Lüneburg museum. Staff must submit a yearly plan in order to obtain funding. Interview, Mähner.

decontextualize and then recontextualize their contents, thereby radically altering the matrices through which meanings may be projected, discerned, constructed.⁴⁶

Exhibitions, as I will show, are products of their time, interpretations of the past subject to the curators and other stakeholders' interests. As with my discussion on monuments the following case studies exemplify the framework of the cultural memory landscape outlined in Chapter Two. The next section concerns two east German *Ostdeutsche* museums, both founded in their current forms after the *Wende*. The Lüneburg exhibition I discuss first was constructed in the mid-1980s, shaped by the socio-political context of that period, but its meaning today will be discerned by visitors who are influenced by the cultural memory of almost thirty years later.

2.1 *Ostpreußisches Landesmuseum*, Lüneburg

In 1958, at the time when some *Heimatstuben* were being founded following the initial phase of resettlement that centred on practicalities, the first incarnation of the *Ostpreußisches Landesmuseum* in Lüneburg was established as a hunting museum, reflecting the history of East Prussia as a land associated with forestry and hunting, and an important aspect of the *Heimat* from the expellees' point of view.⁴⁷ An arsonist burnt it down in 1959, (a plot-line used in Siegfried Lenz's novel *Heimatmuseum*, 1978), along with some other buildings. At this time the museum was funded purely from expellee donations. The influx of refugees doubled Lüneburg's postwar population, to around 65,000; most newcomers came from East Prussia or Silesia. In 1963/64 it opened in new premises, again as a hunting museum and

⁴⁶ Jones, Peter, 'Museums and the Meanings of Their Contents', *New Literary History* 23 (1992), 911-921 (p. 911).

⁴⁷ This theme forms a central motif in Hans Deppe's popular *Grün ist die Heide* film (1951).

still run by volunteers. In 1987 it was the first of the major regional *Ostdeutsche* museums to be established and funded under the BVFG, from this point professionally run.⁴⁸

In 2011, at the time of visit, the permanent exhibition is over twenty years old. Initially the targeted audience was East Prussian expellees but it is recognised that this must change. Plans are underway to remodel both the exhibition and the museum design to attract more visitors from a varied background. Around six to eight changing exhibitions and sixty events such as readings and discussions take place in the museum each year.⁴⁹ Museum staff work in collaboration with partners in Poland and Russia and cooperate on projects such as school exchanges. In the 1990s joint exhibitions were held in Kaliningrad, formerly Königsberg, East Prussia and in Poland. A key aim of the museum is international understanding; the director sees a great opportunity to develop a common history with Poland and Russia.⁵⁰

In an article on the relationship between scholarship on research on the East (*Ostforschung*), state and nation, Michael Burleigh discusses the development of a mindset on ‘the East’ that had been heavily influenced by centuries of Prussian-German contacts with Poland and Russia. This included the notion that the ‘Germans were “bearers of culture” to the Slavs. The latter had arrived in the region posterior to the former’.⁵¹ From the 1920s academic studies concentrated on establishing who had settled there first and who had

⁴⁸ Interview, Mähnert. The Federal Government funds 70% of the museum’s costs (535,000 euros in 2010). The *Bundesland* Lower Saxony funds the remainder. Visitor numbers were around 42,000 in 2009/10. *Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Maßnahmen*, p. 8.

⁴⁹ Interview, Mähnert.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Burleigh, Michael, ‘Scholarship, State and Nation, 1918-45’ in *The State of Germany: The National Idea in the Making, Unmaking and Remaking of a Modern Nation-State* ed. by John Breuilly (Harlow: Longman, 1992), pp. 128-40 (pp. 129-31).

made the greatest cultural contributions. Historians ‘trawled back in time to establish a continuous German presence before and after the Slav migrations [...] to stress the artificiality and transience of the Polish nation-state in contrast to the dynamic, state-forming capacities of the Germans and their rulers’.⁵² I will argue that traces of this mindset still exist and run as a thread through the narratives of some of the *Ostdeutsche* museums in my study. It is particularly evident in the Lüneburg museum.

The publicity leaflet to the museum describes six permanent exhibitions and two temporary ones on five floors that offer ‘impressions and information about an eastern region that was inhabited by German-speaking people for seven hundred years’.⁵³ The preservation of the heritage of the German culture of the East is the key aim.⁵⁴ The leaflet emphasises Germany’s long-standing identification with East Prussia; the first heading reads ‘Part of the German East for Centuries’ and points out the eastward colonisation in the Middle Ages whereby regions like ‘Brandenburg, Silesia, Pomerania and Prussia came to be settled by Germans’.⁵⁵ Throughout the exhibition visitors are confronted by positive images from a glorious past. Even by the lockers in the basement are photographs of the region as it was, including Elbing and Königsberg.

The first floor celebrates human relationships with the natural environment: huge showcases display ‘true-to-life dioramas’ with stuffed animals, antler trophies, tools and weapons associated with hunting and forestry. There are sections devoted to amber, metal-working, ceramics, the

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ The East Prussian Museum, an English language version of the museum leaflet, the German leaflet was unavailable at the time of visit.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

rural economy and fishing. Again, a prime focus in the exhibition is on longevity, centuries of culture and natural artefacts associated with the *Heimat*, comparable to expellee monuments that focus on folklore and nature.

Floors Two and Three contain most of the historical and cultural information. The top floor is used for temporary exhibitions, often associated with events of flight and expulsion or the loss of the lands. In 2011 work by regional artists Klaus Seelenmeyer and Ernst Mollenhauer was displayed, including depictions of East Prussia by the former such as *Königsberg Untergang*, *Madonna auf der Panzerkuppel 1947* and *Die Apokalypse 1945*. The commentary indicates that cultural establishments were founded under German rule such as the Königsberg Academy of Arts in 1845 and the artists' colony at Nidden that originated from the end of the nineteenth century, as well as noting renowned artists like Max Pechstein, Lovis Corinth and Käthe Kollwitz who came from East Prussia. The museum's collection of art from the lost regions is second only to the *Ostdeutsche Galerie* in Regensburg.⁵⁶

East Prussia is presented as above all a region of culture and learning: sections feature Immanuel Kant, Copernicus and E.T.A. Hoffmann. The leaflet makes a grand claim that East Prussia is the 'Source of European Intellectual Life' as if all European intellectual history originated from here. The relationship with Poland is portrayed in just one section, with a poster showing *Die drei Teilungen Polens 1772-1795* and a narrative that appears to show the Third Reich as comparable to the Soviet Union in 1939, and indeed also to the Allied victors of World War Two. It is implied that all three deployed illegitimate power politics:

⁵⁶ Interview, Mähnert.

Die Schwäche und Zerrüttung des polnischen Wahlkönigtums ausnutzend, setzen die europäischen Großmächte Rußland, Preußen und Österreich ihre politischen Interessen in gemeinsamer territorialer Zerstückung Polens durch. Dieses Prinzip illegitimer Machtpolitik findet unter anderen 1939 Nachahmung durch das National Sozialistische Deutschland und die kommunistische Sowjet Union sowie 1945 durch die Politik der Siegermächte des Weltkrieges gegen Deutschland.

For the purpose of my study I will focus particularly on the section headed *Von Weltkrieg zu Weltkrieg 1914-45*. The museum leaflet notes that the Treaty of Versailles meant the loss of more than 70,000 square kilometres of German territory. East Prussia lost the Memelland and was separated from the rest of Germany by the Polish Corridor. Half a million people out of the prewar population of two and a half million in East Prussia died. ‘Like the rest of East Germany East Prussia was given to the victors and their allies’, concludes the leaflet in this section in a somewhat minimalist statement.⁵⁷ No mention is made that the ultimate loss of East Prussia had resulted from Nazi aggression.

The 1914-45 space jumps about chronologically, and between social history and political history. In some ways it seems as if artefacts were obtained and then narrative commentaries constructed around them with no overall organising principle. Accompanying texts are sketchy and lack contextualisation. The heritage of the past is acclaimed, yet critical comment on the recent past is avoided. When any criticism is necessary, for example of the National Socialist past, the text asserts that East Prussia operated as the rest of Germany, yet when a positive aspect of history is under discussion then East Prussia’s uniqueness is emphasised. The 1914-45 section is tucked away round a corner, by the side of a huge dais, about thirty feet wide and

⁵⁷ The East Prussian Museum.

twelve feet high, depicting flight and expulsion, which is highly visible. Adjacent to the dais is a large, detailed narrative board and small vitrines full of everyday artefacts that illustrate the experience of East Prussians being deported to Siberian work camps or to Danish internment camps.

The narrative board *Ostpreußen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* begins: ‘Mit dem Angriff auf Polen am 1.9.39 entfesselte Hitler den 2. Weltkrieg’. The stress laid on Hitler as the key perpetrator gives an impression of an innocent general public. Interestingly the word Hitler is smudged, as if a visitor has tried to erase it. The Jewish question is dealt with in one sentence in the following narrative:

“Ein Volk – ein Reich – ein Führer”
1933 bis 1945 – Die Diktatur des Nationalsozialismus

Das bestehende parlamentarisch-demokratische System wurde mit Übernahme der Staatsgewalt durch Hitler beseitigt. Durch ein zentralisiertes Organisationssystem durchdrang der Nationalsozialismus auch in Ostpreußen die gesamte soziale, wirtschaftliche und berufsständische Ordnung.

Die Juden erlitten Demütigungen, Entrechtung und Verfolgung und den Abtransport nach Riga oder Theresienstadt.

Opposition und Widerstand wurde u.a. in der Bekennenden Kirche deutlich und in dem Attentat auf Hitler in der Wolfsschanze bei Rastenburg am 20. Juli 1944. Die auf Aufrüstung und Autarkie ausgerichtete Wirtschaft führte zur Gesundung der ostpreußischen Landwirtschaft und zum Aufschwung der an der Rüstung beteiligten Unternehmen.

Ostpreußens außergewöhnliche Landschaft und seine Baudenkmäler wurden beliebtes Touristenziel. [...] ⁵⁸

Understandably, museum interpretation panels cannot be lengthy tomes; however, the subject matter is dealt with here in such a way as to emphasise resistance to Nazism and the economic benefits of the war to East Prussia.

⁵⁸ A vitrine displaying leaflets does, however, include mention of a Jew being banned from a gym.

The Holocaust and the murder of six million Jews is omitted in the same script that points out clear resistance against the regime and boasts about the advantages of the war to East Prussia. Riga and Theresienstadt are mentioned and presumably Jews were transported thence to Auschwitz and other death camps, but this is elided. The overall impression created is that the region was a proud cultural province with inhabitants who were largely innocent victims who are devoid of any responsibility for historical events. No real emphasis is placed on any broader responsibility for the war; it seems that only Hitler bore the blame. East Prussia appears as an innocent land of culture and beauty, invaded at the war's end and violated. There is no mention of the fact that this region voted overwhelmingly for National Socialism.⁵⁹ There is no mention that this region now belongs to Russia. It is as if the region ceased to exist when Germans left.

Flight and expulsion is depicted by life-size figures on a raised platform, representing a group on a trek over the icy Haff (Figure 39). Some carry rucksacks and a wooden handcart stands by a woman wearing a furcoat, a *Fluchtpelz*, holding a suitcase. A child sits on a sled. Figures face away from the visitor, looking towards a slide-show that projects black and white images of flight and expulsion, visible to the figures and the observer. The misery and suffering is enhanced for the viewer by not being able to see the figures' faces, as the figures take on a depersonalised pathetic quality.

⁵⁹ 56.5% voted for the NSDAP in March 1933, higher than any other region. Salzborn, *Grenzenlose*, p. 33.



Figure 39. *Ostpreußisches Landesmuseum*, Lüneburg

Wall cards describe the artefacts on the stage and a personal account entitled ‘In wenigen Stunden mußte alles geräumt werden...’, written by Paul Bernecker in June 1950 accompanies the simulation. There are no further artefacts of the sort seen in *Heimatstuben*; no coats of arms, *Tracht* or *Heimaterde*. This display depicts flight and expulsion, not the loss of the *Heimat*. The whole space devoted to 1914-45 has fewer vitrines and artefacts than the rest of the museum, where East Prussia’s heritage and treasures of the past are displayed, leaving the visitor aware of the stark contrast between the problematic recent history and the glorious past prior to the twentieth century.

The museum sets out to convey the exceptional long-standing Germanic nature of this region, to emphasise what had been lost. In the *About Prussens and Prussians* section of the museum leaflet the claim is made that knights of the German Order converted the heathen Baltic Prussens and conquered the lands in the 13th century. Emphasis is placed on the ‘special role of the later province of East Prussia [which] ended in 1867 with the membership in the

Confederation of the North German States and the integration into the German Empire in 1871'.⁶⁰ The leaflet therefore seems to suggest that East Prussia was so extraordinary that the whole German nation derived from it. The museum contains a prized painting, which depicts Queen Luise meeting Napoleon in 1807 in Tilsit. The artist apparently took great care to portray these two famous people as equal in stature, despite Napoleon's smaller figure.⁶¹ In some ways this distortion appears to correlate with how the museum reflects its past, although in this case balanced the other way. The achievements of East Prussia are overstated and the negative aspects of its history are scarcely mentioned. Visitors would leave with a one-sided view of East Prussia under the Germans if this were their only or main source of historical information.

2.2 *Schlesisches Museum*, Görlitz

As with monuments, the presentation and perception of the past is a two-way process; museums may present a version of a historical past but people will interpret it from different perspectives. Susan Crane believes we rely on museums to get the past right for us, and some visitors actually object if they are offered contradictory versions.⁶² However, one person's view of the past frequently contradicts another's, as will be seen here. As Crane notes, the process of historical consciousness 'exceeds any single combination of place or time [...] and occurs "locally" as a person's private thoughts'.⁶³

⁶⁰ The East Prussian Museum.

⁶¹ Interview, Mähner.

⁶² Crane, Susan A., 'Memory, Distortion and History in the Museum' in *Museum Studies: an Anthology of Contexts* ed. by Bettina Messias Carbonell (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 318-34 (p. 323).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

The *Schlesisches Museum* in Görlitz engages with and confronts the recent past and does not shy away from issues and from provoking reactions, however, its approach is not overtly partisan. The river Neiße runs through Görlitz; in 1945 the western half of the town remained German and retained the name Görlitz and the eastern half became the Polish Zgorzelec. Innumerable refugees and expellees crossed the river in 1945. Figures from 1949 show 38% expellees living in the town in comparison to 20% in Saxony as a whole.⁶⁴ The museum aims to appeal to both Polish and German visitors and provides free entry for schoolchildren from both Görlitz and Zgorzelec.⁶⁵ It also works in cooperation with Polish and Czech museums in which joint exhibitions are presented.⁶⁶

The museum's openness to critical engagement is evident from the outset by its layout. Almost the first item that the visitor sees when approaching the start of the exhibition on the third floor is a *Schlesien wird preußisch* information board which states clearly 'Die Kulturlandschaft Schlesien formte sich in einer Epoche, in der es noch keine Nationalstaaten gab'. The exhibition commences with a computerised slideshow of the changing 'ownership' of Silesia from its origins and the second board is a 1790 quote from Goethe, pre-unification, remarking that Silesia has always impressed visitors. The third placard brings the story up-to-date: 'Schlesien nimmt wieder seinen angestammten Platz ein, im Herzen des geeinten

⁶⁴ Schrammek, Notker, 'Görlitz als Stadt im Zentrum des Vertriebenenproblems im Sommer 1945' in *Görlitz von der mittelalterlichen Handelstadt zur Grenzstadt an der Neiße: Nähe Ferne Ferne Nähe* ed. by Uta Marquardt and Norbert Faust (Zittau: Gunter Oettel, 2000), pp. 160-68.

⁶⁵ The Federal Government provides half the museum's funding, (446,000 euros in 2010). Saxony provides the rest. Visitor numbers were around 50,000 in 2010. *Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Maßnahmen*, p. 10.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Europas, als Brücke zwischen den Völkern', contextualising the point about visitors being impressed regarding Silesia's position between East and West, the phraseology also non-confrontational, de-emphasising the nation state in its reference to a united Europe. Unlike the Greifswald museum that I discuss next, there is no progressive chronological order and the theme of expulsion is interwoven throughout the entire exhibition. However, the mood aims to be positive and future-based, rather than solely focused on past wrongs and suffering. In an early section on Görlitz and the Oberlausitz region, expellees are mentioned whose memories were suppressed yet they now live after the *Wende* in this border region with the hopes of a united European future. The exhibition ends with the Nazi period and the very last section is devoted to expulsion, entitled *Untergang und Neubeginn*.

Although the museum's aim appears to be for openness to historical debate there is, nonetheless, a tendency for Germany to be shown as leading the way in the development of Silesia as a cultured land and also as rightful possessors of the province. For example, according to a text on the early Polish Piast dynasty: 'Die Piasten stehen aber auch für die Öffnung Schlesiens zum deutschen Kulturkreis. Piastische Herzöge holten im 13. Jahrhundert deutsche Siedler ins Land'. The impression given is that Silesia would not have developed without the Germans who were peacefully invited into the country.

The notion of building a Silesian museum had been mooted in West Germany from the 1970s; originally destined for Hildesheim, post-*Wende* the decision was taken to locate the museum in Görlitz.⁶⁷ In 1996 a foundation

⁶⁷ Interview, Martina Pietsch, Museum Curator.

was created with a working committee of four partners; the Federal Government, the regional Saxon government, the town council and the *Landsmannschaft Schlesien*. The latter body has a place on the quarterly review board but provides no funding to the museum. The other partners finance the museum and give overall parameters; however, the director of the museum, Markus Bauer and the eleven members of staff have the power to frame the exhibits as they see fit.⁶⁸ Polish representation was requested during the construction of the exhibition but the Poles declined due to the presence of Rudi Pawelka, chairman of the *Landsmannschaft Schlesien*, who is involved with the *Preußische Treuhand*, which was founded in 2000 with the aim of demanding compensation and return of confiscated property to the expellees; he was therefore regarded by the Poles as too aggressive and anti-Polish in attitude.⁶⁹ Polish dignitaries did, however, attend the opening ceremony and speak about the importance of collaborative working. Andrzej Tomaszewski, the Polish General Conservator spoke of there being no longer two historical cultures, the German and the Polish: ‘es gibt nur die eine Wahrheit über die europäische, übernationale Kunst Schlesiens, die ein wichtiges Kapitel des gemeinsamen europäischen Erbes ist’.⁷⁰ The mayor anticipated the museum being a starting-point for future authentic research of ‘unserer Heimat’, thus an attempt at inclusivity.⁷¹

The museum opened in temporary headquarters in 2001 and moved to the current building on 13 May 2006, one of the most striking houses in

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ *Schlesisches Museum zu Görlitz: Eröffnung am 13. Mai 2006: Grußworte, Festrede, Predigt* (Görlitz: Verein der Freunde und Förderer des Schlesien Museums zu Görlitz-Landesmuseum Schlesien e.V., 2006), p. 22.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 7.

Görlitz, dating back to 1526 and constructed in early Renaissance style (Figure 40).



Figure 40. *Schlesiisches Museum*, Görlitz

Renovation and reconstruction works cost nineteen million euros and a thousand exhibits are displayed in two thousand square metres of space. The spatial setting is itself a part of Silesian culture and reinforces an implied authenticity; in several rooms ornate painted ceilings remain as traces of the past. One room shows the history of the building and its various renovations and conversion. The museum has essentially three parts: the *Schönhof* for early history, the *Mittelhaus* for later history and the *Fischmarkthaus* for changing exhibitions. Commentaries are in German and Polish, and the website has additionally an English language option.

The diverse culture and turbulent history of Silesia is emphasised; the exhibition works its way, although not strictly chronologically, from the early Middle Ages when Slavonic tribes occupied Silesia, followed by the Polish Piast rulers of the thirteenth century. Shortly afterwards German settlers continued its development and it became part of the Habsburg empire for two hundred years until the Prussians conquered it in 1740. Silesian tolerance and coexistence of different cultures is highlighted. In one room exhibits are presented individually in moodily lit columns, which act as time-capsules. The main placard informs: ‘Die Dinge geben Hinweise auf das Leben ihrer Besitzer und auf die Zwecke, für die sie dereinst gefertigt wurden – auch wenn es manchmal schwer ist, die Zeichen richtig zu deuten’. It is thus recognised that traces of the past can be variably interpreted and the framing leaves a sense of freedom of interpretation. One ‘time-capsule’ shows a religious painting brought by an expellee and another shows an envelope found recently under the floorboards of a house in Zgorzelec; on 15 July 1940 the previous German Groeger family had written on it their misgivings about the Hitler regime and hidden it there, together with a newspaper from the last day of peace, 31 August 1939. The Polish owners of the house managed to trace the grandchildren of the previous occupants; again the museum stresses reconciliation in younger generations, a joint German/Polish relationship and by the prominence given to this artefact it also highlights resistance to the Nazi regime.

The *Mittelhaus* rooms show the *Provinz im Umbruch*; post-Napoleonic period, the move from agriculture to industrialisation and the growth of Breslau as a *Kunststadt*. A collection of art is displayed including some

landscape paintings of the Giant Mountains.⁷² In an earlier section concerning the beauty of this region the visitor comes across nine woodcarvings of Rübzahl, the ubiquitous symbol of this area. Under the roof eaves the World War One era and its aftermath is depicted, again with a German slant on the issue of the 1921 plebiscite which decided that Upper Silesia would return to Poland:

Die Oberschlesienfrage blieb ein ständiger Konfliktherd. In Deutschland entstand der Mythos von der 'blutenden Grenze'; die Regierungen betrieben offen die Rückgewinnung des Territoriums. Polnische Behörden verletzten immer wieder die Rechte der deutschen Minderheit.

Though 'Mythos' is emphasized, some credence is given to the notion of the German minority as persecuted. The display also points out that around this time the wearing of *Tracht*, which had been dying out as a custom, became popular once more 'als nationales Bekenntnis', a sure sign of threatened territory and a call on the *Heimat*: 'Besonders in Oberschlesien entwickelte sich ein eigenes Regionalbewusstsein, eine Grenzland-Identität'.

A relatively small space is allocated to the Nazi period and expulsion, although the latter event is consistently cited throughout the exhibition. Two small but key displays on the ground floor of the *Mittelhaus* cover the Nazi time and its aftermath. The scene is carefully set, with detailed contextualisation showing the increasing measures of Nazi terror and the number of concentration camps on Silesian soil. However, there is a significant section on resistance by Silesian people, including the *Kreisauer Kreis* led by Helmuth James Graf von Moltke; perhaps one-sixth of the display is given over to this theme and which thus celebrates Silesian

⁷² The museum currently shows art pre-1945 but is considering including postwar works in future displays. Interview, Pietsch.

opposition rather prominently. While it is important to document that resistance was possible, the space allocated is disproportionate in comparison to the perpetuated atrocities. The exhibition points out that many people fled spontaneously before the arrival of the Red Army in January 1945, and before the German population was forcibly expelled. The placard reads: 'Der größte Teil der Bevölkerung Schlesiens wurde vertrieben. Eine jahrhundertelange historische Entwicklung riss ab', giving the impression that Silesia somehow came to an end as a thriving province without the German population. A few artefacts are exhibited which expellees carried with them on the treks, including a fur coat, a suitcase and a display of house-keys, forbidden, but brought along in the forlorn hope of return. These are framed in a large, wide vitrine, partly in frosted glass, which on the one hand projects an impression of foggy, distorted memory while on the other hand this effect enhances the rarefied nature of the artefacts within as the observer must peer closely to view the objects.

The English leaflet which accompanies the exhibition points out that: 'the Polish government was quick to integrate the new territories. It was to be a new beginning without the German past history', effectively a similar approach to that of GDR expellees who were forced to have no pasts. The exhibition does take care to indicate that Polish people were themselves expelled and resettled into Silesia; Breslau for instance became home to many people from the town of Lwów, whose town became part of the Ukraine. Again the exhibition emphasises parallels and tries to present an openhanded approach which is not inflammatory. However, a German focalisation is still in evidence. A placard indicates that a 'piastischer Mythos' was created;

Silesia was considered a 'wiedergewonnenes Land, das nach Jahrhunderten zum Mutterland zurückgekehrt sei'. Two views are in evidence here: the triumphant language used by Poles, and German disgruntlement classifying the term as a myth. A myth can have different meanings, one being an invented concept that has no authority, or another whereby a tradition or legend arises that may, or may not, have a factual basis but has in any case gained validity through longstanding collective belief. The use of the subjunctive implies the former.

The exhibition ends on a positive note, showing friendships between German and Polish expellees who meet in the old *Heimat* and gives examples of Polish and German craftsmen working together, for example on traditional glassware, which is produced sometimes with the old German hallmark. The German leaflet to the museum points out that Silesian tradition belongs jointly to Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic in a teleology of friendship and cooperation.

Notwithstanding the attempt at a balanced representation, the museum's exhibitions are framed from a German perspective and the framing is variably interpreted, exemplified by the press reports following the opening of the museum. Fifteen national and local press reviews in Germany were generally positive, acknowledging the political delicacy of the work and mostly applauding the way it has been carried out.⁷³ *Die Welt* claimed that the museum offered 'Wissenschaft statt Folklore', no longer 'ein Heimatmuseum zur Pflege des Verlorenen, sondern ein Ort der Selbstvergewisserung durch

⁷³ *Veröffentlichungen in den Medien anlässlich der Eröffnung des Schlesischen Museums zu Görlitz am 13. Mai 2006*, pp. 3-24.

Bildung und Kommunikation'.⁷⁴ The *Ostthüringische Zeitung* pointed out that the collaborative working between Poland and Saxony and the various clubs, government agencies, schools and businesses developed the region in a positive direction.⁷⁵ The only unfavourable review was that from the *Schlesische Nachrichten – Zeitung für Schlesien*, written by Rudi Pawelka, the chairman of the *Landsmannschaft Schlesien*, who claimed that the exhibition needed to be substantially revised: 'vieles wird verzerrt dargestellt, falsch gewichtet oder Wesentliches ausgelassen'.⁷⁶ Amongst his observations is that the approach to Poland is too protective, omitting to show how expellees and Holocaust survivors were mistreated and also that the expulsion is portrayed 'fast wie ein normaler Aus- und Einzug, die völkerrechtliche Dimension sucht man vergeblich'.⁷⁷ Nine Polish media reports were in the main much less positive; several reports claimed the exhibition was not well balanced, that insufficient attention was paid to the Nazi period, its aftermath and Polish suffering in general, and that the exhibition was overly steered by the German expellee organisations. The *Gazeta Wyborcza* felt that the museum falsified history and should be closed; it was outraged at a photograph of smiling, proud-looking German soldiers in Groß Rosen concentration camp and argued that the harsh realities of the camps were dealt with too superficially.⁷⁸ The *Wprost* regretted the lack of contextualisation which would show that the expulsion was retaliation for Nazi crimes, and the

⁷⁴ Seewald, Berthold, 'Orte der Sehnsucht' in *Veröffentlichungen in den Medien*, pp. 11-12.

⁷⁵ 'Schlesisches Museum in Görlitz eröffnet' in *Veröffentlichungen in den Medien*, p. 20.

⁷⁶ Pawelka, Rudi, 'Schlesisches Museum zu Görlitz: Viele Korrekturen notwendig' in *Veröffentlichungen in den Medien*, p. 24.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁷⁸ 'Deutsches Schlesisches Museum wurde in Görlitz eröffnet' in *Veröffentlichungen in den Medien*, p. 33. Museum staff made a decision not to display what have become 'iconic' photographs of Auschwitz, believing that people have become too accustomed to them. Interview, Pietsch.

deficiency of historical accounts important from the Polish perspective. It also notes that the museum is situated on Brüderstraße, in close proximity to the shop *Schlesische Schatztruhe* which sells books, maps and pottery from the lost Eastern territories and in which can be found: ‘Alben mit Fotos aus Schlesien, vermischt mit der typisch landsmannschaftlichen revisionistischen Literatur’,⁷⁹ although in fact the shop has no association with the museum and expellees in any case have little involvement with the museum. The article goes on to suggest that the solution may be for Poland to invest funding in order to build a similar museum in Breslau/Wrocław, which they could then steer in the direction they feel is more appropriate. Polish reactions are understandable as they concern criticism of the representation of the recent and recallable past portrayed from a German perspective. Visitor numbers are monitored: in 2006 there were 28,000 and in 2010 25,000, mostly older people.⁸⁰ Just 6% come from outside Germany and only 3% of these are from Poland, somewhat belying the cooperative picture painted.⁸¹

The reactions to the Görlitz museum illustrate that it is confronting the recent past, not avoiding it, as in my next example, and contemporary debate ensues from a variety of standpoints. It strives for an evenhanded approach and to set out German/Polish equivalences yet this is not fully accomplished, possibly because these equivalences are contrived and ideological in their own way. It is clearly difficult when dealing with these issues to avoid provocation, especially in such a location directly on the German/Polish border. An expectation of historical consensus seems currently unrealistic.

⁷⁹ ‘Über uns in unserem Namen’, in *Veröffentlichungen in den Medien*, p. 40. Although there is no formal, official monument in Görlitz this shop could be regarded as a commercial focus for commemoration.

⁸⁰ Interview, Pietsch.

⁸¹ Ibid.

In 2011, as part of the third *Sächsischen Landesaussstellung*, two exhibitions are running, one in the *Schlesisches Museum*, Görlitz and one in the *Muzeum Łużyckie* in Zgorzelec, entitled *Lebenswege ins Ungewisse*. The Görlitz exhibition focuses on migration post-1933, a date that a curator felt was far more significant than 1945.⁸² Tall vitrines and signposts chart the way to the temporary exhibition from the museum entrance, in an attempt to pique curiosity. Acknowledging Jewish victims first, the initial vitrine contains two *Stolpersteine* that will be laid in 2012 in *Bismarckstraße* to commemorate Carl Jacobsohn and his son Hans who were murdered in Auschwitz. This is a curious example of double memorialisation, using the device of a vitrine to highlight the sacred nature of a commemorative object normally found on the pavement outside the property of a Jewish victim. It also raises the profile of the *Stolpersteine*, which are sometimes regarded as debasing Jews as the stones are walked over just as Jews were trodden down in the Third Reich.⁸³ Video screens at head height dominate the exhibition space. Twenty-three interviewees relate their stories in a 35-minute cycle, arranged as if they were talking to each other. Along one wall is a bank of ten vitrines, each one exemplifying a person, and containing an artefact or two symbolising their message, plus a biography. Significantly the first example is entitled *Verfolgung und Ermordung der Juden*, followed by showcases on prisoners of war and forced workers, the divided town, and then expellees. Other cases include GDR refugees and Greek communists; many of the latter resettled in Zgorzelec after persecution in the 1946-49 Greek-Albanian conflict. There are two ways of viewing this exhibition. The first is to consider whether mimesis

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Imort, p. 237.

is being undertaken, equating other victims with Jewish suffering, or whether Jewish victims are shown as hierarchically more important. The latter seems more credible as the exhibition itself commences with a narrative regarding Jewish victims and the first object a visitor encounters is the *Stolpersteine* vitrine in the imposing museum entrance.

The small Lusatian museum across the border in Poland, a mere seven-minute walk across the Neiße bridge from the *Schlesisches Museum* shows migration from the Polish perspective in a two-room exhibition. While I do not analyse the Polish exhibition in detail as it is beyond the scope of my thesis, it is interesting to note its presentation. The plight of Polish expellees is depicted; their suffering in conditions similar to German victims is shown, such as the fact that they were transported in cattle-trucks at extremely short notice. Two videos relate how Poles suffered twice over, through Nazi aggression and through the Red Army and Ukranian persecution. Polish propaganda is indicated in two interesting examples that bear correlation to that shown in German displays; they are similar in form, yet different in context. The first speaks of: ‘der Ansiedlungsaktion auf den West- und Nordgebieten, die in der polnischen Propaganda den Namen “die wiedergewonnenen Gebiete” trugen’. The Polish exhibition therefore also finds this phraseology uncomfortable.⁸⁴ The second points to expellees being called ‘Repatriierten’, reminiscent of GDR expellees being called ‘Umsiedler’.

Viewing both exhibitions together leaves an impression of individual suffering in both lands at the hands of state aggressors. Moreover, the focus of

⁸⁴ The exhibition languages are Polish and German.

the temporary German exhibition transmits the view of a ‘maturing’ Germany, one that is now highly conscious of its past and which strives to contextualise its representation of history in a manner which demonstrates its commitment to European rapprochement in line with cultural memory norms and the socio-political climate of the early twenty-first century.

2.3 *Pommersches Landesmuseum*, Greifswald

Similar to the *Schlesisches Museum* in Görlitz, the *Pommersches Landesmuseum* in Greifswald lies in the far-eastern part of Germany; not a border town but one which is situated in Vorpommern, adjacent to the region of Hinterpommern that became part of Poland in 1945. Its infrastructure comprises a cluster of old buildings and it aims to present a splendid cultural past, framed by that architecture (Figure 41).⁸⁵



Figure 41. *Pommersches Landesmuseum*, Greifswald

⁸⁵ The Federal Government funded the museum 535,000 euros in 2010, around half its costs, the rest came from the town and the *Bundesland*. Visitor numbers were around 100,000 in 2009/10. *Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Maßnahmen*, p. 9.

Developed from a Franciscan cloister, in existence from 1262, the museum functioned as the *Stadtmuseum in der Klosterbibliothek* between 1929 and 1999. In 1996 a foundation was established to create a museum that would reflect the history, culture and art of Pomerania.⁸⁶ In May 2000 a prestigious art gallery was established and in June 2005 the gallery and former museum were joined together to encompass six houses and four outdoor areas, including a garden of glacial erratic boulders, connoting both movement and solidity, the latter providing a tenuous link to some *Heimat* memorials constructed of the same material. Stress is laid on historical connections between Pomerania and the Baltic Sea, Sweden and Denmark in the belief that it is only possible to show the varied history of Pomerania by working in close cooperation with partners in Poland and Scandinavia. Cultural exchanges take place between the *Kaschubische Institut* in Danzig and the *Narodowe Museum* in Stettin.⁸⁷ The museum sees itself as a forum for the Baltic region and as a venue for joint working especially with a focus on working with young people.⁸⁸ Additional activities include guided tours of the region, in both German and Polish parts of Pomerania and theatrical or musical events.⁸⁹

Up to June 2010 the museum exhibited 14,000 years of Pomeranian history and culture but ended on the eve of the Thirty Years' War. Before that the tendency appeared to shut off the post-1618 past from public exposure, almost mimicking the museum's origins as a cloister. The *Pommerntage* held by expellees in Greifswald between 1992 and 2000, stressed the role of the

⁸⁶ Fassbinder, Stefan et al., *Pommersches Landesmuseum Greifswald* (Munich: Logika, 2005), p. 8.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

⁸⁸ Interview with Uwe Schröder, Museum Director.

⁸⁹ Museum handouts, from interview with Schröder.

museum as central to Pomeranian culture.⁹⁰ Previously twenty-eight bi-annual *Pommerntreffen* had taken place, all in West Germany; the first one being in Lüneburg in 1949.⁹¹ The *Ostsee-Zeitung* commented in 2000 that Greifswald was now claiming its cultural identity, with the *Pommersches Landesmuseum* taking on a key role as conservator and mediator of cultural heritage.⁹² However, the museum's strategy of silence on the recent past avoids potential confrontation. The exhibition has now been extended to include a time period up to 1900 but there is still no mention at all in the museum of the Nazi period or of flight and expulsion and its aftermath.

The start of the exhibition concentrates on the land by the sea, showing how Pomerania was formed. There is a section on the Slavs and how they immigrated; further exhibits show the move into modern times. Eldena monastery near Greifswald features often, a motif of the Romantic artist, Caspar David Friedrich, who was born in the town in 1774. Other displays feature life on the land, religion, origins of Greifswald in 1250, Hanseatic Pomerania, pilgrimage, the Reformation, the Renaissance, and the University.

From June 2010 the exhibition has been extended to incorporate Pomeranian history from 1600. The visitor now sees a rich, multi-media depiction of Pomeranian history up to the year 1900 with sections in the new exhibition focusing on the region under non-German hands and work is underway to bring the museum up to date. Of the three museums in my study, Greifswald has had the most recent revision and with no trace here of the Germanic partisanship seen in the other two museums. Crucially, expellees

⁹⁰ StA Greifswald, *Ostsee-Zeitung*, 5 May 1992, p. 13.

⁹¹ Ibid., 14 May 1994, p. 13. At first they had concerned economic and social issues; once the disputed borders were mostly accepted the focus has been on contributing to the continuation of the culture of the lost lands.

⁹² Ibid., 3-4 June 2000, p. 13.

are not involved in the day-to-day running of the establishment and although the *Landsmannschaft* is part of the museum's foundation this in reality means merely a seat at the quarterly board meeting. Avoiding the influence of *Landsmannschaften* and expellee clubs in an *Ostdeutsche* museum results in a markedly different portrayal of German history and culture.

The new exhibition shown from June 2010, entitled *Von der Schwedenzeit zum Kaiserbad. Pommern von 1600-1900* starts with *Fast 200 Jahre Schweden*, sub-titled *Zwischen dem 30-jährigen Krieg und Napoleon 1618 –1815*. The first information board lists chronological events comparing Pomeranian history to that of Germany, Europe and the world. This stands in contrast to other *Ostdeutsche* museums which have a restricted world view, or exclude a global perspective altogether. The German-Polish binary characteristic of presentations of history which focus exclusively on bilateral relations is thus avoided. Several sections show Sweden's influence on Pomerania and pick out aspects of accomplishment such as the surveying of the province, in an analogy to how Germany's influence is often portrayed positively, by Germany, with respect to Poland and the East. An elaborate multimedia display allows visitors to explore aspects of this achievement. Interactive displays such as touch screen computer displays are incorporated, intentionally to attract younger visitors. Vitrines display porcelain and silverware to illustrate trade, under the heading *Geben und Nehmen über die Ostsee* and again Sweden's role is positively described: 'Pommerns Handel profitierte von der Zugehörigkeit zu Schweden', in stark contrast to the line taken in other *Ostdeutsche* museums, most notably Lüneburg. A certain orthodoxy is evident here that appears to promote close international

relationships, pointing to the economic benefits of trade, exchange and migration. It is perhaps easier to present such a view in Sweden's case, a prosperous country that is relatively unburdened by the past, in contrast to German relations with Poland. A vitrine highlights traditional costume in the region around 1800, immediately followed by a section on emigration: *Besser Leben in der neuen Welt?* In an interesting parallel to forced flight and expulsion this room concentrates on those Pomeranians who chose to emigrate to America or Canada and thorough research has turned up some video recordings of American descendants in Milwaukee celebrating their *Pommerntag* on 28 June 2008. The exhibition ends with a focus on Pomerania as a tourist region: *Von Heringsdorf zum Kaiserbad*.

In terms of information available for visitors, the museum has no English guidebook and even German leaflets were unavailable at the time of visit. The museum's extensive website, however, has English, Swedish and Polish translations. Staff at Greifswald are currently preparing to incorporate twentieth century history, including flight and expulsion, into the museum's exhibits. Preparations include a search for eyewitnesses, to include an American airman who bombed Swinemünde as well as Polish and German expellees. The director Uwe Schröder estimates it will take five years to complete, at a cost of around 500,000 euros. Annual visitor numbers are around 60,000 per annum,⁹³ and as the exhibition stands, visitors see a broader portrayal of European, not German history that exerts a kind of pride in its own evenhandedness.

⁹³ Interview, Schröder.

The new museums established since the *Wende* in east Germany have been less involved with expellee groups. As I have already argued with reference to the Görlitz museum the involvement of *Landmannschaften* in museums can result in a slight pro-Germanic tendency even where efforts are made to be less chauvinist. But the Greifswald museum is steered by the director alone, with support from university professors, qualified curators and other academics. The museum represents the history of the whole of Pomerania, including that part that is now Polish and there is a Polish member of staff.⁹⁴ This exclusively professional approach is evident in the displays that are crucially different from those in the Lüneburg museum.

To turn to Marstine's paradigms, to some extent the three museums in my study could be seen as shrines, where objects are fetishised. The Lüneburg museum bears more resemblance to a *Heimatstube* than a modern museum, it is shrine-like and contains elements of the patriotic consciousness identified by Roth in 1920s *Heimat* museums that I discussed in my introduction. However it also, like the Görlitz and Greifswald museums, functions more as a hybrid of a market-driven industry/colonizing space and post-museum. Although funded by the BVFG, all three museums must satisfy their stakeholders and fulfil their business plans by self-support via visitor throughput. Though constructed variably, the exhibitions have, to some extent, upheld the notion of German superiority, the 'self' against the inferior 'other', thereby demonstrating characteristics of a 'colonizing-space' museum. All have attributes of the post-museum, which Marstine sees as the most hopeful model; they strive to work in partnership, involve the local

⁹⁴ Ibid.

community and acknowledge visitors as active, not passive consumers.⁹⁵ The two east German ones take this further by engaging in difficult issues, exposing conflicts and acknowledging variable perspectives.

My study has revealed key differences in west and east German *Ostdeutsche* museums. The Lüneburg museum is older with a problematic tone and has been shaped by the *Landsmannschaften* who even today have some influence. The Görlitz museum has some limited input from *Landsmannschaften* and its exhibition deliberately sets out to present Polish perspectives, though with an overriding occasional ‘return of the repressed’ where a sense of Germanic superiority dominates the focalisation. It is less evenhanded than the Greifswald one, but much less patriotically overt than the Lüneburg one. After its upgrade in 2010, history in the Greifswald museum is carefully and critically portrayed; however as it stands it still shies away from the twentieth century. Noticeable too, is the tendency for the east German museums to be more progressive than the west German one, which is framing history as a backward-looking shrine, the cultural importance set in the past with less recognition of its role in the Europe of the future. Museum personnel in Lüneburg do recognise that a pro-European focus and new orthodoxy is desirable but at the moment there is little evidence of this; though the new exhibition may be framed otherwise. It will be interesting to compare the configuration of the latest version set in its specific socio-political context with that of the old model configured in the socio-political climate of 1987.

⁹⁵ Marstine, p. 19.

3. Art and the Lost *Heimat*: the *Ostdeutsche Galerie* in Regensburg

In this case study I discuss what is to some extent a *Heimatmuseum*, established under the BVFG in 1966 and financed partly by the BVFG, however, the twenty-first century *Ostdeutsche Galerie* must balance the tension between the obligation to preserve a specific culture on the one hand and the requirements of an art museum tied to the values of the international art scene on the other.

In order for museums to be financially viable they must usually attract income from visitors, thus exhibitions must entertain, as well as inform, and temporary exhibitions are often used to generate crowds and consequently funds. Few museums have sufficient funding from governments, corporations, charitable foundations or private benefactors to finance their work alone; they are not ‘pure’ environments.⁹⁶ The museum that is driven by financial considerations is one of Marstine’s four paradigms and I consider this aspect in the case of the *Ostdeutsche Galerie* in Regensburg, where I explore how a publicly financed gallery, fifty percent of which comes through the BVFG, portrays the lost *Heimat*.⁹⁷

In 1951 Regensburg established a *Patenschaft* with the *Sudetenland* and in the same year the *Galerie Zeitgenössischer Kunst Ostbayerns* was founded, expanded in 1957 to include exhibits from Sudeten German artists. The *Stiftung Ostdeutsche Galerie* came into existence in 1966, established in accordance with the BVFG, and the *Kunstforum Ostdeutsche Galerie* opened

⁹⁶ Marstine, p. 11.

⁹⁷ The Federal Government funds half the gallery’s costs (593,000 euros in 2010). The federal state and town funds the rest. Visitor numbers were 86,000 in 2009/10. *Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Maßnahmen*, p. 11.

in 1970.⁹⁸ An art gallery existed here from 1910, although the cluster of buildings originates from 1652, thereby bestowing an air of longevity on the works exhibited. The spatial configuration of any establishment sets the context from the outset and the architecture used in a museum is the infrastructure that gives it meaning, frames the exhibits and shapes the viewing experience.⁹⁹



Figure 42. *Ostdeutsche Galerie*, Regensburg

Here, the bright red-carpeted frontal columns, irregularly positioned as a support to the old buildings in an interesting fusion of old and new, natural and artificial, convey the potential of the art within (Figure 42). I argue in this section that although the gallery was set up to preserve the culture of the eastern territories, in 2013 its key focus is to enhance its own standing as a major art museum and it adapts its purpose flexibly to maintain that reputation. The gallery works in partnership with the old *Heimat* and indeed

⁹⁸ Tittel, Lutz, 'Vom Schießplatz zum Kunstplatz: Zur Geschichte der Museumsgebäude' in *Museum Ostdeutsche Galerie: Festschrift zur Wiedereröffnung 1993* (Regensburg: Aumüller, 1993), pp. 9-22 (pp. 16-18).

⁹⁹ Giebelhausen, Michaela, 'The Architecture is the Museum' in *New Museum Theory and Practice* ed. by Marstine, pp. 41-63 (p. 42).

constructs a *Heimat* paradigm in places in the exhibition. However, no art in the exhibition depicts the events of flight and expulsion. The gallery avoids potential controversy in favour of creating an artistic collection that is marked by prestige.

The exhibition space covers some 2,500 square metres and permits a collection of 2,500 paintings and sculptures as well as 30,000 works on paper.¹⁰⁰ The base of the collection came from the *Adelbert-Stifter-Verein* in Munich, which existed from 1948 and included six hundred works from Bohemian artists like Emanuel Hegenbarth, Emil Orlik, and Adolf Hölzel. This collection was expanded by works (around 2,400) from the artists' guild of Esslingen, formed in 1948 as a *Begegnungs- und Wirkungsstätte* by expellees like Alexander Camaro, Rolf Cavael, Otto Herbert Hajek and Bernard Schulze. Over the next twenty-five years the gallery was supported by the state and federal state and received loans, and donations from clubs, institutions and private individuals to become a 'beachtliche Kunstsammlung'.¹⁰¹

In a professionally run art gallery museum tasks like 'Sammeln, Bewahren, Erforschen und Vermitteln' are key.¹⁰² Staff regard it important to work in partnership with cities like Gdańsk, Kaliningrad, Breslau and Prague and also with Warsaw, Budapest und Bucharest: they aim for one big exhibition per year with a partner and produce a multilingual catalogue.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Lorenz, Ulrike and Gerhard Leistner, *Erinnerung und Vision 100 Meisterwerke der Sammlung Kunstforum Ostdeutsche Galerie Regensburg* (Regensburg: Aumüller, 2005), pp. 12-13.

¹⁰¹ Leistner, Gerhard, 'Szenen aus dem Alltag eines Kustos: Die Gemälde- und Skulpturensammlung' in *Museum Ostdeutsche Galerie: Festschrift zur Wiedereröffnung 1993* ed. by Lutz Tittel (Regensburg: Aumüller, 1993), pp. 41-56 (pp. 41-54).

¹⁰² Tittel, Lutz, 'Wohin schaut Pallas Athene? Perspektiven des Museums Ostdeutsche Galerie' in *Museum Ostdeutsche Galerie*, pp. 35-40 (pp. 36-38).

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Research is undertaken on academies in Breslau, Kaliningrad and Prague and their histories, and the *Kunstvereine* in Breslau, Prague, Kaliningrad, Stettin, Timișoara and Kronstadt (Russia) due to their influence on the artists.¹⁰⁴ An important part of the gallery is the archive, which contains substantial information about artists and art academies from the lost *Heimat* and includes magazines and newspapers: 'Diese Bestände sind besonderer Mühe wert, um über diese abgeschlossene Epoche der deutschen Kunst später ein einigermaßen vollständiges Bild gewinnen zu können'.¹⁰⁵ The use of the word *abgeschlossen* implies that this era of German art is concluded or enclosed in a solitary sense and the *Ostdeutsche Galerie* has a part to play in its later rejuvenation. Its library contains around twelve thousand volumes. The archive also plays a supporting role to other less wealthy east European museums.¹⁰⁶ In this way and behind the scenes the gallery takes its role seriously as a conservator of East German culture; however, front of house a different impression is given.

The aim of the gallery has changed over the years and seems to be fluid. Set up initially in accordance with the BVFG to safeguard culture from the lost lands, the 'Verein der Freunde und Förderer der Ostdeutschen Galerie in Regensburg' outlined its specific mission in 1981 and saw the museum as:

nicht als irgendein Museum, sondern als dieses besondere Museum mit seinem spezifischen Auftrag, nach dem es den bedeutenden Beitrag ostdeutscher Künstler zur Entwicklung der deutschen Kunst von der Romantik bis zur Gegenwart dokumentieren soll.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Leistner, pp. 41-54.

¹⁰⁵ Friedl, Klaus, 'Der größte Teil des Eisbergs: Magazine, Archiv, Bibliothek' in *Museum Ostdeutsche Galerie*, pp. 93-98 (p. 93).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹⁰⁷ Reimann, Wolfgang, 'Helfer im Hintergrund: Der Verein der Freunde und Förderer der Ostdeutschen Galerie Regensburg' in *Museum Ostdeutsche Galerie*, pp. 99-101 (p. 101).

A 2012 report of the Culture Commissioner states that the gallery ‘zeigt Tendenzen zeitgenössischer Kunst aus Mittel- und Südosteuropa. Mit seinen Projekten trägt das einzigartige Spezialmuseum moderner Kunst zum besseren kulturellen Verständnis im heutigen Europa bei’.¹⁰⁸ As with the Lüneburg museum, the importance of the East to the development of a national cultural narrative is emphasised. However the gallery’s brief is now so wide that it potentially excludes few artists or works. The gallery focuses on art from the former German *Heimat*, has the biggest selection of nineteenth and twentieth century art from German artists of the old territories but also includes work from those artists ‘die durch ihr Leben und Wirken mit diesen Landschaften verbunden waren und noch sind’.¹⁰⁹ Exhibited works today include artists who influenced eastern artists and also ‘hervorragende Künstler’ like Beuys, Barlach and Vogeler who worked with ‘osteuropäischen Themen’.¹¹⁰ Museum staff have attempted to negotiate the demands of sticking to the original premise of the collection and building up a top-class collection: ‘Eine künstlerische Ambivalence bei manchen auf politische Kompromisse hin arbeitenden Ankäufen ist nicht zu leugnen’.¹¹¹ Furthermore they felt that there was a danger of becoming too narrow in outlook, too provincial to engage a wider public, so a decision was taken to adapt the original aim, resulting in a compromise that illustrates the gallery operating, using Marstine’s paradigm, as a market-driven industry.¹¹² Along the same lines, following the *Wende*, works from GDR artists acquired before 1990, that technically now were not in the lost territories, were retained, including

¹⁰⁸ *Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Maßnahmen*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁹ Tittel, ‘Vom Schießplatz’, p. 19.

¹¹⁰ Tittel, ‘Wohin’, p. 38.

¹¹¹ Leistner, pp. 41-54.

¹¹² Marstine, pp. 11-14.

some from Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, Conrad Felixmüller and Gerhard Richter, ‘als historisches Erbe in der Sammlung’.¹¹³ With the border openings the museum also widened its scope: ‘Nicht mehr Geburtsort bzw. Wirkungsstätte eines Künstlers waren allein entscheidend, sondern der historische und zeitgenössische Künstlerdialog zwischen Ost und West trat in der Mittelpunkt’.¹¹⁴

In 2013 the permanent exhibition ‘Erinnerung & Vision’ displays eastern European art from the Romantic era through modernity to contemporary works and there are also changing temporary exhibitions.¹¹⁵ An accompanying catalogue shows a hundred master works from the collection, divided into fifteen sections that follow the logic of the exhibition. Art can portray history – overtly, as in depictions of battles or events like flight and expulsion, or indirectly, as for instance in use of symbolism to portray looming catastrophes. Remarkably, art in the *Ostdeutsche Galerie* does not depict flight and expulsion directly, yet the collection is a showcase in the main for artists from the lost lands whose work depicts historical changes, both in portrayal of events and in artistic styles. The collection is set out in broadly chronological themed epochs.

The exhibition uses a *Heimat* framework to illustrate how the idyll of the nineteenth century landscape is changed by the impact of modernity and its consequences. Exhibited art makes political statements that depict how rural and indeed urban environments are disturbed by progress, technological

¹¹³ Lorenz, p. 12-13.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ For example, from 18 March to 24 June 2012 work was shown by the graphic artist and cartoonist Dieter Olaf Klama, born in Upper Silesia in 1935, and from 17 February to 12 May 2013 the exhibition *Dialog über Grenzen* was displayed, a collection of art from eastern and central Europe by the former journalist Hans-Peter Riese.

advances and ultimately war and expulsions. The collection starts with late nineteenth century and early twentieth century paintings that depict landscapes, townscapes and people of the lost regions in a variety of styles. *Land in den Lüften: Seelenlandschaften zwischen Ostsee und Riesengebirge* is the first section, portraying Romantic art which links people to the landscape in which they were born, using characteristic *Heimat* rhetoric. ‘Jeder Mensch wird in eine Landschaft, eine Zeit, in ein geistiges Klima geboren und von ihnen geprägt. Viele sind lebenslang auf der Suche nach dem verlorenen Paradies ihrer Kindheit, das Heimat heißt. Was bleibt, sind Erinnerungen’.¹¹⁶ Works include city scenes showing, for example, Prague in 1810 and landscapes like Caspar David Friedrich’s 1848 *Hünengrab auf Rügen*. The narrative to this section points out that art aids against forgetting and declares the East, and its portrayal in art, as a refuge against modernity, while covertly criticising modernity:

Auch Maler im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert holten mit Pinsel und Ölfarbe das Verlorene oder Zurückgelassene, das Ferne und Fremde in ihre Gegenwart hinein, um es dem Vergessen zu entreißen. [...] Der Osten schien schon immer weit entfernt von Fortschritt und Metropolen. In Zeiten industrieller Expansion und existentieller Katastrophen machten Künstler ostdeutsche Landschaften zwischen Baltikum und Banat zu Arbeitsrefugien und Sehnsuchtsorten.

Here, the stress is not claiming the lost lands of the East as a progressive economy as exemplified in, for instance, my discussion of the Reichenberg monument at Augsburg, rather the East is here an untouched, rural idyll.

Heimat as spatial setting is accented in the next section *Verdute und Vision: Prag & Breslau, Königsberg & Danzig: Ansichten zwischen Romantik und Realismus*, where pictures are displayed dated between 1840 and 1853,

¹¹⁶ Lorenz, p. 17.

including one of the town hall in Breslau from Eduard Gaertner, the Marienkirche in Danzig by Johann Friedrich Stock, and a rural landscape in Neuwaldegg by Adalbert Stifter. However, the narrative mixes the time-period of past and future, showing that these places will not remain idylls of the *Heimat*. Pointedly, it mentions Auschwitz, the absolute epitome of Nazi terror: ‘Verdrängte und vergessene Namen ziehen uns an: Danzig, Königsberg, Breslau. (Wo liegt Auschwitz?) Topographien der Sehnsucht und des Schreckens greifen ineinander, ohne sich zu berühren’.¹¹⁷ The section suggests coexisting utopia and terror, namely the *Heimat* idyll and the terrible effects of modernity, with Auschwitz invoked as an antithesis to *Heimat*.

Works by distinguished artists Lovis Corinth and Käthe Kollwitz convey the consequences of World War One. Visitors can view Kollwitz’s characteristic suffering mother and son sculptures like a 1975 copy of the *Pieta* 1937-8, which is displayed four times its actual size in the *Neue Wache*, Berlin. Also featured is *Abschiedwinkende Soldatenfrauen II*, dating from 1937 and the *Turm der Mutter* sculpture.

The significant path of idyll heading towards catastrophe follows in a section headed *Ostwärts: Idyllen und Apokalypsen Mensch und Natur zwischen Impressionismus und Expressionismus* that features, amongst others, Lyonel Feininger’s 1940 *Die Ruine auf dem Kliff*, Ludwig Meidner’s 1916 *Mondsichellandschaft*, and Franz Radziwill’s 1928 *Dorfeingang (Ende eines Arbeitstages)*. The latter shows what looks initially like a typical *Heimat* setting; local people gathering at the entrance to a cottage, leaning on a fence and chatting. One man is reading a newspaper and the news may therefore

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

intrude on the peaceful paradise. There are indeed signs of less happy times. A man has a finger missing, perhaps a war injury? Technology is intruding. A shipyard features in the background with a sailing ship interspersed between two steamers. A steam locomotive is incongruously placed in the cottage garden; overhead black clouds gather in the sky with a red splash in their midst like a monstrous face peering down and bombers circle ominously over the villagers' heads, who seem oblivious to the danger. The mixture of village peace and technically advanced threat from above seems surreal and suggests an apocalyptic vision. Painted in 1928 at a time of relative peace and prosperity after the early political chaos and hyper-inflation of the Weimar Republic and before the violent economic crash of 1930-1, Radziwill portrays a vision of unsettled times ahead, that the viewer knows from her current day perspective will certainly arrive. The depiction of tension shows the *Heimat* as retreat from, and reaction to, modernity. Ludwig Meidner's 1916 *Mondsichellandschaft* on the other hand, painted in the middle of the First World War, is an example of the *Großstadtexpressionismus* painter's 'Untergangsvisionen, die als "Apokalyptische Landschaften" in die Kunst eingehen' as his work often did between 1912-1916.¹¹⁸ Reminiscent of the flat, painted décor of the film *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* the painting depicts distorted city buildings divided by a river and in the foreground three distorted figures in hats appear to be running away from the architecture that threatens to overwhelm them; two have their arms raised in gestures of panic. The new moon landscape depicts fear of change and what lies ahead.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

The ultimate disturbance to the old *Heimat* generated by Nazism is seen in the next two sections. Headed *Unvollendete Moderne. Kunstakademie Breslau: Lehrer, Schüler, Weggefährten* the first room displays work by such artists as Oskar Moll and Otto Mueller, located between Dresden and Weimar, styles that cover Die Brücke and Bauhaus. Carlo Mense's 1930 *Abendliches Vorstadtbild* is an allegory of Germany in the 1930s, the threat of Nazism and its impending disaster, according to the commentary. The Breslau art academy was closed in 1932 as a result of the political changes. The section *Geschichte und Erinnerung Schauplatz Deutschland: Mythen und Motive* includes twentieth-century paintings like Wolf Röhricht's 1929 *Trauerfeier für Reichsaußenminister Gustav Stresemann*, but also features some earlier work of the nineteenth century that depict historical events such as the 1844 Weavers' Rebellion in Silesia. 'Kunst in Deutschland war mit Konflikten ihrer Zeit immer eng verwoben', indicates the narrative, which demonstrates historical events and conflicts, however, not chronologically. 'Das nationale Dilemma der Deutschen', is outlined as if history happened without responsibility, a historical mosaic, rather than grand narrative, and the depicted art shows positive and negative aspects from over a century of time: 'Der Spannungsbogen deutscher Erinnerungsbilder seit Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts reicht von Menzels Realfantasten über Preußens Glanz und Gloria bis zu Fronius' Totentanzexpression als Hommage an die Opfer des NS-Staates'.¹¹⁹ Bernhard Heisig's painting *Festung Breslau – die Stadt und ihre Mörder*, 1969, portrays the traumatic events of Breslau's capitulation in 1945. He uses an image of a naked, tied-up woman laid on a swastika as an

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 91.

‘Allegorie der geschändeten Stadt’ and in one corner stands St. Hedwig, the ‘Schutzpatronin Schlesiens und der Stadt Breslaus’.¹²⁰ Women, as so often the case, stand allegorically for on the one hand the innocent victim of war and on the other hand, as a symbol of power, yet in this case they are threatened, vulnerable and powerless. Anselm Kiefer’s 1978 *Noch ist Polen nicht verloren*, the title taken from the 1796 Polish freedom hymn, also uses symbolism, the white horse standing for the destruction of the Polish army by the German troops.¹²¹ Two initialled heads depicting Nazi ‘martyrs’ Horst Wessel and Albert Leo Schlageter are contrasted with two German poets (Dietrich Grabbe and Heinrich von Kleist), classified by the Nazis as ‘geistige Vorläufer’, and a Silesian religious philosopher Jakob Böhme observes the scene.¹²²

The last five exhibition rooms concentrate on changes in artistic styles. The narrative of the *Traum und Analyse* section, a heading with an interesting interplay of opposites, comments that:

der Zivilisationsbruch, den der Nationalsozialismus mit Völkermord und Holocaust beging, war auch für die Kunst eine Katastrophe. Der Siegeszug der abstrakten Nachkriegsmoderne in der Bundesrepublik kann als Flucht aus Geschichte und Gegenwart gedeutet werden. Mehr noch liest er sich als Selbstlegitimation der Künstler durch Rückgriff auf die Moderne.¹²³

The text suggests artists had to take refuge from both past and present in their use of abstraction, implying that the postwar period was as problematic as wartime. The use of *Flucht* can be interpreted as having a double meaning, alluding also to expellee flight.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 96.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 97.

¹²² Ibid., p. 97.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 115.

In *Wirklichkeit und Malerei im medialen Bild* the final section of the exhibition moves on from abstraction and includes photography, film, video and computer graphics from artists like Gerhard Richter, Katharina Sieverding and Sigmar Polke. Using a motif of fracture and entitled *Der zerbrochene Spiegel*, the narrative indicates the break with the past and historical continuity. In an allusion to the *Heimat*-Modernity dichotomy it points out: 'Der Ursprung des Bildes ist nicht mehr die Natur, sondern ein anderes Bild in einem anderen Medium'.¹²⁴ Depicted here in 2011 was a photograph of men wearing Hitler moustaches, from the politically motivated artist group IRWIN, founded in Ljubljana in the 1980s, therefore not artists who were expelled but who originate from an eastern region, demonstrating once more the widening brief of the gallery, intended to keep up to date in its display of art from Eastern Europe. The rationale here, however, is clearer than art displayed in 2010 when a 1990 light installation by Dan Flavin from New York was exhibited for a short period, untitled other than designated *für Otto Freundlich*, the Pomeranian painter who was murdered in Majdanek in 1943. Flavin appears to have no connection whatsoever to the eastern territories; it is merely the designation that suggests a thematic link. Once again the widening of the gallery's brief is in evidence.

The *Ostdeutsche Galerie* was inaugurated to conserve and display artists' works from the eastern territories. As already mentioned, its original brief has now been adapted, presumably due to its emphasis on operating as a market-driven industry, and this effect has modified its original purpose. The gallery strives to focus on eastern art, as its BVFG funding would be reduced

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 137.

otherwise. Additionally, as Bavaria has its 'vierter Stamm' from the *Sudetenland* it is seen as desirable to display artists' work from that region. It does not feature any work that engages with flight and expulsion, perhaps surprisingly, yet its exhibition leads the observer through a historical process. While not making a statement of position the commentary gives hints for interpretation yet remains obscure. As Bennett observes, 'seeing the art exhibited serves as a means of *seeing through* those artefacts to see an invisible order of significance that they have been arranged to represent'.¹²⁵ Visitors may read the art in a less literal way using these kinds of analyses. The *Ostdeutsche Galerie* is, to some extent, a *Heimatismuseum*, in that it shows art from a particular region, but overt patriotism is not in evidence. Some art and accompanying narratives depict the nature of German crimes in the Third Reich, thereby acknowledging some responsibility. Nevertheless, the gallery has a dilemma. It needs to operate as a thriving commercial concern and has therefore adapted its purpose to ensure sufficient visitors to fund its activities. The drawback is that it has thus sacrificed a stricter adherence to its original brief and in this way its focus as an *Ostdeutsche* museum has diminished. However, the strategy appears to be working in that the years 1989 to 1997 were the most successful in its history and the museum is a highly rated successful concern.¹²⁶ The 'market-driven' need to engage a wider public has the effect of broadening, diluting, and complicating notions of 'ostdeutsche Kultur' in ways that might be unexpected. It leads us to question what is 'ostdeutsche Kultur', in that the preservation of the eastern German culture intended by the BVFG of 1953 seems here no longer applicable. Indeed such

¹²⁵ Bennett, p. 165.

¹²⁶ Lorenz, p. 12-13.

perpetuation may no longer be desirable. Showing contemporary eastern European art, as well as how artists of the lost lands have influenced contemporary art is clearly not the same as preserving the art and culture of the pre-1945 lost *Heimat* and it may become a facet of a future European-wide cultural spectrum.

4. Integration and Exclusion: Exhibitions in Gehren and Molfsee

In my introduction I outlined the problems encountered by expellees during integration in both East and West Germany, in terms of accommodation, employment and conflict. Von Plato and Meineke's oral history study into expellee integration in East Germany concludes by assessing factors that helped or hindered assimilation. The assisting factors include the expanding job market, the *Bodenreform* (redistribution of agrarian land) and the egalitarian elements of life in a socialist state. The hindering factors incorporate suspicions of the SED and the Soviet Union; comparisons to better West German conditions; no compensation for expellees along the lines of the *Lastenausgleich* and importantly 'ihre mangelhafte gesellschaftliche Anerkennung als Flüchtlinge: das Schweigen-Müssen'.¹²⁷ The exhibition presented in the *Heimatstube* at Gehren reflects a strong reaction against such lack of public recognition in East Germany. Discrimination against expellees occurred socially as well as in other contexts. In 1949 an opinion survey in Schleswig-Holstein found that 61% of the locals regarded the refugees as 'Störenfriede'.¹²⁸ Hermann Kronemeyer, himself a newcomer, remembers that refugees were called 'Kartoffelkäfer' implying that their arrival resembled a

¹²⁷ von Plato and Meineke, pp. 252-56.

¹²⁸ Niemann, Thorsen, *Flüchtlinge in Norddeutschland*, NDR, 2004, 3 March 2006.

plague.¹²⁹ The *Fremdes Zuhause* exhibition portrays the challenges facing expellees in these circumstances.

4.1 *Freilichtmuseum Molfsee*, near Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, *Fremdes Zuhause* Exhibition 30 May 2009 - 26 December 2010

Three elements combine to represent history in this exhibition: a film, a 256-page catalogue, and the exhibition itself, in which authentic souvenirs from the old *Heimat* are displayed in typical west German manner. The forty-six minute film that runs on a continual loop depicts historical developments of the integration process from first arrival through to the 1960s. Historical footage shows the Nissen huts where up to twenty-eight people were accommodated in one room with little furniture and kitchen equipment. Snow came through holes in the walls in winter and the winters of 1946/47 and 1947/48 were particularly harsh. Interviewees in the film were, of course, children at the time, who integrated fairly easily, unlike the adults for whom it was a ‘catastrophe’. Unemployment affected expellees four times as much as locals. It was not unusual for school class numbers to reach fifty. Margarete Pohl comments in the film on the abundant illnesses that affected weakened people, the lack of medicine and being afflicted by lice; but there was ‘Solidarität im gemeinsamen Leben’ too; a sense of shared identity was inculcated. The film shows how many people felt unwanted, particularly in rural areas, but some examples of successful integration are also provided. As time went by life improved through better conditions, work and the *Lastenausgleich*, although many locals mistrusted the claims of lost fortunes. The loss of status, being ‘no-one’ seemed worse than material losses to many.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

By the end of the 1950s most expellees had left the camps but Pohl lived in one till 1961. She comments wryly that even then there was prejudice against them, they had to continually prove they were ‘keine Verbrecher’.¹³⁰

In themed entries the catalogue sets out the difficulties faced during the integration process: the loss of identity; the locals as a ‘geschlossene Gruppe’ difficult to penetrate; the feeling for the *Heimat* (old and new); worker groups like farmers who once owned farms but now had to labour for others; religious difficulties; and marriage problems (where expellees were seen as not good enough for locals). It also contains several chapters which focus on positive elements like the successful setting up of expellee businesses. The narrative comments that it was harder for those to adjust who suffered bad experiences on the treks westwards as well as those who arrived later, and who encountered more difficulties. Also set out is the background for the exhibition. Exhibits had previously been displayed in the half-timbered *Haus aus Bergenhusen* at Molfsee, home of the current exhibition (Figure 43), for many years, donated by the *Stiftung Pommern, Landsmannschaft Ostpreußen* and *Stadtgemeinschaft Tilsit*. A smaller version of the 2009-10 exhibition will be retained in the *Haus aus Dahmsdorf* on the same site.

At the entrance to the exhibition some context for the visitor is displayed using pasted banner headlines that show eyecatching relevant figures; for example, ‘70%’ (the increase in Schleswig-Holstein’s postwar population) and ‘4 Wochen’ (the average length of an expellee journey).

¹³⁰ Quotations from the film *Fremdes Zuhause: Die Jahre Danach: Flucht und Vertreibung in Schleswig-Holstein nach 1945*, dir. Kay Geddes, 2009.



Figure 43. Molfsee exhibition house

A narrative board headed 'Massenbewegung' lists dates that start with Schleswig-Holstein's population at 1939 of 1.5 million, then moves to September 1939 'Angriff auf Polen, Beginn des Zweiten Weltkrieges und Umsetzung von Hitlers Ostweiterungsplänen' followed by the air raids of July 1943 that caused relocation of people from large cities like Hamburg to the rural areas. All events concern Germans as victims, for example the Wilhelm Gustloff disaster of 30 January 1945 with the loss of 10,000 lives, with no mention of National Socialist crimes. The last date, 1949, shows Schleswig-Holstein now with a population of 2.7 million. The visitor then enters the exhibition space through a fly-curtain, as if to separate exhibition context from main body, or to simulate being invited into someone's living quarters, where she encounters narrative of the flight events, pasted quotes from expellees, abundant photographs and pictures, mannequins in traditional costume, clothing, political posters of the time and models of typical camp rooms.

Vitrines display representative and valued artefacts like *Heimaterde* (Figure 44).



Figure 44. Molfsee exhibition - *Heimaterde*

Narrative banners include: *Integration durch Selbsthilfe*; *Wappen und Trachten*; *Flucht und Vertreibung in Film und Fernsehen*; *Die Zeichen der Integration* and *Vertriebenen im Spiegel der Presse*. The latter section displays newspaper articles and headlines, all of which indicate expellee suffering, for example ‘Heimat Verlust’ or ‘Die Vertreibung soll in Schulbüchern “Transfer” heißen’, from *Die Welt* of 6 April 1977.

Comments in the visitors’ book relate to expellee suffering. One person refers to the ‘Entwurzelung und Heimatslosigkeit’ being suffered by ‘Kriegsenkeln [...] oft bis heute’, and another refers to parallels with refugees from the Lebanon, Iraq and Syria and ‘Misstrauen und Ablehnung’ that still exists today. Some visitors write how they appreciate the exhibition in its portrayal of the past. One comments that the exhibition is ‘sehr “blauäugig” zusammengestellt. Kein Wort oder Bild zur politischen Dimension. D. h. wer

führte Krieg und warum und mit welchen Mitteln bis die Kriegssituation kippte und es nun umgekehrt zu Vertreibungen kam'. Whatever the iterated view, the exhibition has undoubtedly left an impression of expellees as victims and the visitor comment is apt; there is a lack of emphasis on Germans as perpetrators. The exhibition undeniably aims to convey the difficulties faced in the new, foreign home, as the name suggests, but there is no discussion of German perpetration without which there would have been no necessity for resettlement.

4.2 *Vertreibung und Integration* in the *Heimatstube* in Gehren, Thuringia

In contrast to the expellees as victims shown in the Molfsee exhibition, here they are depicted as talented people who benefited Gehren by their arrival. The whole focus undertaken is to reverse the image that locals had of expellees, that they came with nothing, 'Null komma Null', as Erwin Tesch, the amateur expellee curator says, people who had nothing to offer the new *Heimat*. Rather than focus on the cultural capabilities of the expellees which are seen sometimes in elaborate monuments like the one discussed in the last chapter at Augsburg, Tesch's exhibition shows cultural skills that have resulted in artefacts made *after* the expulsion, in the new *Heimat*. A vitrine in the exhibition shows products, mostly glassware made in the GDR, not brought from the old *Heimat*. Sudeten Germans brought their talent with them, he says, 'im Kopf'.¹³¹

Distinguished by its rather unpleasant, stuffy smell that conveys a sense of infrequent use in contrast to the well-attended Molfsee exhibition, the

¹³¹ Interview, Tesch.

Gehren *Heimatstube* is situated in the attic of the *Schloß und Stadtmuseum* by the *Schloßpark*, but has no connection with it. The exhibition includes mannequins and dolls wearing *Tracht*, maps of the lost lands, pictures with captions and a photograph of ‘Ankunft in Gehren’ (Figure 45).



Figure 45. Gehren *Heimatstube*

In such settings it is always a female who wears the *Tracht*, reflecting the fact that women are seen as the creators of the *Heimat*. A monthly report from 21 October 1948 shows the *Ortsansässige* as numbering 3,254 and *Fremde* as 1,324; 4,578 people in total. The word *Fremde* conveys the difficulties faced by the newcomers. Sections are devoted to *Bildung*; *Kultur*; *Fleiß*; *Engagement*; *Zähigkeit*; *Erfindungsreichtum*; *Wille zum Überleben*, *Integrationsleistungen* and *Persönlichkeiten aus der Heimat*. A final section headed *Reges Verbandsleben* focuses on BdV activities since the club's founding on 6 September 1992 with photographs, and a map entitled *Reisefreudiger Verband* shows where expellees have travelled to in the old *Heimat*. The abundant use of personal qualities as headings demonstrates the

impact on individuals, and represents them as resourceful and capable, rather than victims.

The local BdV office is on the floor below, typically with maps of the old territories and plaques on the walls. Tesch, an expellee from Pomerania, constructed the exhibition, which opened in 2006. He has strong views about what he is trying to present; he is aiming not for nostalgia but has an educational aim. He is consciously trying a different approach here in Gehren from the one he believes has been otherwise followed in West Germany.¹³² The aim here is an exhibition, not a museum, and Tesch refuses to show exhibits like prams or ice-skates from the expulsion, which he believes do not really convey a message, other than nostalgia, and might in any case not be authentic. Instead his approach is ‘90% dokumentarisch’. A suitcase is one of the few original artefacts, which Tesch knows is authentic; as a child he saw it used on the trek by his mother.¹³³ The result is a sort of document centre, rather than a *Wunderkammer* type of *Heimatstube* seen generally in the West.

The exhibition demonstrates how Gehren’s development has been changed by the influx of expellees and it receives about a thousand visitors per year, around half of whom are expellees. In a very different set up to the Molfsee exhibition the room is given free of charge but all running costs have to be paid for by expellee contributions. The key for Tesch, a former teacher, is that museums should not merely portray, but should have a didactic approach: ‘Was ist in einem Museum gefördert oder was ist nur geschildert?’¹³⁴ The Gehren approach appears to be operating under principles set out in the early GDR. In 1946 the Schwerin folk museum

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ GDR expellees in any case retained fewer artefacts than those in the FRG. Interview, Steinert.

¹³⁴ Interview, Tesch.

reopened as a model for other museums to follow, aiming not just to show past treasures, but rather to link the past to the present, specifically to the lives of working people. Visitors should appreciate the everlasting values engendered by work and revere the displayed regional handicrafts.¹³⁵ This theory was more limited in its application to other museums than the authorities had anticipated, due to financial constraints; however the Gehren exhibition works along similar lines.

The Molfsee exhibition *Fremdes Zuhause* focuses on a historical approach to integration that covers the whole of Schleswig-Holstein. It is professionally curated, although many expellees were consulted and feature in the accompanying film. Its portrayal shows expellees as suffering victims, coming to terms with a new *Heimat* and often experiencing discrimination from the locals in the early days. Its artefacts are the standard variety, objects brought with expellees on the flight. A mostly successful though protracted integration process is portrayed through interpretation boards but the artefacts lend the exhibition a shrine-like nature and it resembles a *Heimatstube* in its appeal to the emotions and compassion of the viewer. In complete contrast the Gehren approach shows expellees as pro-active people who changed the life of their new *Heimat* for the better because of their skills and hard work. The artefacts here are in the main those from the new *Heimat*, like GDR glassware, not old objects shown as *Erinnerungsfiguren* of the old *Heimat*. The amateur approach in this case is more akin to a professionally curated museum and unlike most *Heimatstuben*, in that it deliberately promotes a statement of position; however, there is also no pretence here of

¹³⁵ Palmowski, p. 39.

evenhandedness and its mission is clear and direct. Both exhibitions were constructed in the first decade of the twenty-first century, and are therefore products of the view of the assimilation process in the contemporary cultural memory landscape, namely that expellees suffered from practical difficulties, discrimination, loss of status and identity, often for years. However, the exhibitions also demonstrate the effect of *different* socio-political influences on individuals over the time-period from 1945 to date. The Gehren *Heimatstube* epitomises the will of expellees to retain and publicly display the attributes of their identity despite the attempted inculcation of the official memory culture in the GDR.

5. *Heimat* as Spectre: *Heimatstuben* in Rendsburg and Altenburg

In this section I contrast two *Heimatstuben*, founded at different times, therefore influenced by the cultural memory context at the time of establishment. The Rendsburg *Heimatstube* dates from 1970 whereas the Altenburg *Heimatstube* was founded some twenty years later after the *Wende*, in 1991. In west German *Heimatstuben* authentic artefacts, especially photographs and maps, are used to stimulate and sustain memory of the lost *Heimat* by acting as a conduit, a lifeline to the past, similar to how a medium communicates with the spiritual world. The old *Heimat* exists as undead, its territorial incarnation no longer belongs to the expellees, but it is by no means deceased, rather preserved within the new. In east German *Heimatstuben* the old *Heimat* is replicated: artefacts are mostly shaped from new as simulacra, to create a counterpart *Heimat* where the old identity can be drawn on to regenerate a new identity in the post-GDR world.

Due to the inability to publicly discuss the old *Heimat* and the inculcation of a socialist *Heimat* in the GDR, fewer traces of the old homeland remain as artefacts or photographs. Tangible objects were not always retained and descendants could not pass them on to *Heimatstuben* as in the West. Additionally younger generations were encouraged, or indoctrinated, into the adoption of a socialist *Heimat* as I noted in Chapter Two. Lack of open public discussion and debate in the formation of cultural memory and the suppression of communicative memory about the old *Heimat* resulted for some expellees in a reduced affinity to their old homeland and this effect is amplified for their descendants. More of my east German interlocutors speak about the lack of attachment of their children to the lost lands than their west German equivalents due to their upbringing in the GDR; it is notable that west German *Heimatstuben* often involve younger generations in their activities.¹³⁶

5.1 Gerdauen *Heimatstube*, Rendsburg, Schleswig-Holstein

Kreis Gerdauen, near Kaliningrad in East Prussia has been a *Patenschaft* of Rendsburg's since 18 October 1953. Fifteen years later the *Gerdauen-Stube*, a type of *Heimatmuseum*, was founded, in what once was a railway waiting room, in which such artefacts as old postcards, photographs, maps, pictures and coats of arms from the old *Heimat* were displayed.¹³⁷ Later the *Heimatstube* was moved to Königinstraße, and is now run by Bernhard Gienau, expelled as a nine-year-old from near Gerdauen. Gienau finds his old *Heimat* is becoming more important to him, as he gets older, and he

¹³⁶ For example, interviews with Scholz, von Blaustark, Pippus, Seethaler.

¹³⁷ 'Feierstunden der Patenschaft', *Schleswig-Holstein Landeszeitung*, 11 October 1968.

undertakes regular visits back to the area. ‘Die Geschichte wachzuhalten’ is the prime purpose of the *Heimatstube* in his opinion; he is keen to ensure that *Schleswig-Holsteiner* do not forget that this province was once German, a comment I hear often from expellees and which reflects the importance to them of retaining their regional identity.¹³⁸ The town of Rendsburg allows the building to be used free of charge, maintenance costs are paid from expellees’ contributions, and the *Heimatstube* features as a tourist attraction in a 2011 brochure, ‘Wege zur Kultur’, illustrating the ‘Kulturgeschichtliche Sammlungen und Museen im Kreis Rendsburg-Eckernförde’. Most visitors are elderly; either expellees or with some affinity to East Prussia.

The *Heimatstube* consists of two rooms which are crammed with exhibits from Gerdauen (Figure 46); furthermore the cellar is full of artefacts that have been brought back either on the flight and expulsion itself or on later trips.



Figure 46. Gerdauen *Heimatstube* artefacts

¹³⁸ Interview, Bernhard Gienau.

Model towns of the Gerdauen region are also located in the cellar. Additionally craftwork is shown, created after the event, such as a pair of mittens knitted to a traditional pattern, to ensure the continuation of old traditions or to signify that previous identity is not lost. The building of model towns or recreating traditional crafts speaks of a need to reproduce the old *Heimat* as far as possible in the new one. Similarly a carved wooden cross, engraved *Ostpreußen 1945*, commemorates the sinking of the three ships the Gustloff, Steuben and Goya. Almost all exhibits are encased in vitrines; even the most commonplace items like coathangers (Figure 47). A common device in *Heimatstuben*, and museums, is the placing of artefacts within vitrines. The Church originally used this method to preserve and venerate saints' relics, which enhanced the holy and sacred notion of the exhibits.¹³⁹



Figure 47. Gerdauen *Heimatstube* - coathangers

¹³⁹ Putnam, p. 14.

Vitrines protect the objects, which may be vulnerable, but they are also used to present everyday artefacts, typically those displayed in *Heimatstuben*, as worthy of attention, something exceptional. As James Putnam comments, this ‘embodies a very particular display aesthetic which has a singular ability to transform magically the most humble object into something special, unique and generally more attractive and fascinating’.¹⁴⁰ It also means that objects are often displayed away from their original environment, without a context that might enable meaning to be gained. Coathangers have no intrinsic value, other people may find them worthless away from their old function as clothes carriers, but they played a part in a past, now revered life and act as symbols of it in the present. They portray a trace of genuine experience, being a conduit to a nostalgic past that appears better than the present. Additionally, as their function in the past is remembered, at least for expellees, it can spark a wider recollection of that past by igniting a slumbering ember of memory.

There is no narrative or apparent order for the exhibits, rather a mosaic or collage type of presentation which is a recurring theme in such *Heimatstuben*. The passion for collecting *Heimat* artefacts and preserving them in *Heimatstuben* is similar to the erection of monuments, whereby the old *Heimat* then symbolically coexists within the new one. The real *Heimat* has been taken away in an attack on identity, the collections are a way of still belonging to it. This *Heimat* cannot be so easily removed; it offers security and is more under its owner’s control, like erecting a permanent and complete system ‘against the destructiveness of time’.¹⁴¹ Although expellee collections are often far from systematic, they are extensive and the *Heimatblatt* of the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁴¹ Elsner and Cardinal, p. 1.

local BdV club, as in Rendsburg, regularly publishes changes to the *Heimatstube* collection. As expellees die, their families frequently donate possessions to the local *Heimatstube* and it is becoming an increasing challenge as to how to accommodate this material. The collections now assume the role of markers of death and the passage of time. Some *Heimatstuben* are like an antiquarian bookshop or fleamarket stall where chaos reigns but a little gem may await the patient ferreter. In others like Gerdauen, the *Heimatstube* is like a cruiseship; the sightseer encounters select objects which entertain while the majority of its contents lies beneath the surface, in this case in the cellar, symbolically a link to the subconscious where expellees might retain the old *Heimat* while being fully aware that it is unattainable.

A large rotating stand of the type used to exhibit posters contains postcards and photographs that can be flipped through to trigger memories for expellees or to inform visitors of what once existed (Figure 48).



Figure 48. Gerdauen *Heimatstube* - photographs

The photo ‘fixes time, but it also steals time, establishes a hold on the past in which history is sealed, so to speak, in a continuous present’.¹⁴² Photos imply that the *Heimat* can persist, even if only retained as an undead spectre.

The photograph works differently from a symbolic representation of *Heimat*, such as a sculptured female figure or a Rübezahl, or *Heimaterde* in that it records exactly what once existed as a powerful trace of the past. In this way photographs have the power to legitimise the past. As Roland Barthes notes, ‘the Photograph is indifferent to all intermediaries: it does not invent, it is authentication itself [...] the past is as certain as the present, what we see on paper is as certain as what we touch’.¹⁴³ While this truth is less certain today, in times of easy computer enhancement, the observation still has a certain resonance. It seems unlikely that photographs in *Heimatstuben*, for example, will have been later manipulated. However, it is not to say that there is one indisputed truth. Although Barthes states that photographs never lie, he qualifies that by indicating they are also tendentious.¹⁴⁴ The apparent truthfulness can be a lie. In Episode One of Edgar Reitz’s film *Heimat*, for example, the character Glasisch-Karl impishly places his hand on Mayor Alois Wiegand’s shoulder, just as a photograph is being taken at a picnic site. A later viewer would believe they were close friends when actually the mayor dislikes Glasisch-Karl, thus the film seeks to cast doubt on the notion of photography (and indeed the cinematic image) as authentic.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Clarke, Graham, *The Photograph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 12.

¹⁴³ Barthes, Roland, *Camera Lucida* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1982), pp. 87-88.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁴⁵ Palfreyman, *Edgar Reitz’s Heimat*, p. 96.

Just like symbols, photographs can be interpreted individually and differently. Just like a *Heimat*, they are ‘an invitation to sentimentality’.¹⁴⁶ For expellees the forced parting heightens sentimentality. Their *Heimat* was abruptly taken away and for many years it was difficult to revisit the region. Photographs were then a tangible proof of what once existed, turning it ‘into an object of tender regard, scrambling moral distinctions and disarming historical judgements by the generalised pathos of looking at time past’.¹⁴⁷ Though Barthes argues that ‘our consciousness does not necessarily take the nostalgic path of memory’ and that photographs do not necessarily invoke ‘*what is no longer*, but only and for certain *what has been*’,¹⁴⁸ such nostalgia does pertain for expellees. Although they know that their *Heimat* exists in this form no longer, they recall it nostalgically as it once was. ‘Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement’ argues Svetlana Boym, ‘but it is also a romance with one’s own fantasy’.¹⁴⁹ Some expellees no longer revisit the old *Heimat* as they cannot bear to see the new reality, what Demshuk calls the ‘Heimat transformed’.¹⁵⁰

While the Rendsburg *Heimatstube* is run by an expellee, the *Neustettin Museum* in Eutin, located within the same building as the town’s prestigious *Ostholstein-Museum*, is run by two daughters of Pomeranian expellees and illustrates the sometimes powerful affinity to the old *Heimat* felt by some descendants. Siegfried Raddatz, the chairman of the *Neustettiner Kreisverband*, oversees the establishment and Gudrun Wölk and Rita Kennel, open it for visitors every Wednesday between 1500-1700 hours, or by

¹⁴⁶ Sontag, Susan, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1979), p. 71.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Barthes, p. 85, his emphasis.

¹⁴⁹ Boym, Svetlana, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. xiii.

¹⁵⁰ Demshuk, p. 176. Expellee interviews.

arrangement. Like Gienau in Rendsburg, Wölk believes the history of the former regions needs preserving to educate the local *Schleswig-Holsteiner* who visit the museum, as well as expellees. Kennel's father came from Belgard, Pomerania and spent years in captivity in Siberia. When he eventually came to Schleswig-Holstein neither he nor his mother ever spoke about the past to Kennel and now she feels she has a gap in her life that she tries to fill by working voluntarily at the *Heimatismuseum*, which she believes is a place for reflection. Some visitors have apparently not been pleased with the displays. They feel the past should be erased; however, Kennel thinks that history should be portrayed. They do not try and glorify the past, she says, they just show history.¹⁵¹ But the history they sincerely and naively show is that from an amateur perspective, without much context, or narrative, and they base the presentation around artefacts they happen to possess. Many visitors feel moved by what they see; they often find tangible traces of their past, family names in old files for example, or they are affected by the atmosphere created by the past artefact being viewed in the present. The cumulative effect of so many objects in a confined space can be powerful, and can indeed enhance the affiliation to the old *Heimat* felt by descendants of expellees involved in running such establishments. As Kennel observes: 'Ich habe einen pommerschen Einschlag', namely, 'Pomerania is in my blood', a comment that she hears also from many visitors.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Interview, Rita Kennel.

¹⁵² Ibid.

5.2 Altenburg *Heimatstube*, Saxony

Unlike the Gerdauen *Heimatstube*, the *Heimatstube* in Altenburg is a hybrid composite of an office space, a meeting room, and a visitor centre run by expellees (Figure 49).



Figure 49. Altenburg *Heimatstube*

Typical for east Germany, it houses collections of books about the old territories, keeps expellee records, sends out regular newsletters and organises local activities. No descendants are involved in its activities. Old maps and coats of arms adorn the walls and glass cases contain artefacts like dolls in *Tracht*. Unlike the Rendsburg example, it deals with all the former territories, a sign of its later establishment.

Altenburg's population numbered 56,400 in 1944, of whom 9,600 were refugees; by the beginning of 1946 the latter number had risen to 20,000.¹⁵³ Following the earlier founding of expellee clubs and *Landmannschaften* in the area post-Wende, the *BdV Kreisverband Altenburg* was founded on 13

¹⁵³ File, expellee club, Altenburg.

March 1991, one of the first and most active in the area and it swiftly developed a partnership with Paderborn, in North Rhine-Westphalia.¹⁵⁴ At one time the club had 5,000 members who came from several regions of the old territories, in the year 2000 there were 2,000; now there are 500 – ‘die biologische Lösung’ as it is wryly named. Situated in an attractive old building on Topfmarkt in Altenburg town centre, the *Heimatstube* was opened on 1 August 1991, the first in Thuringia and acted as ‘Heimatstube – Hort der Begegnung, der Kommunikation und Beratung’, the word ‘Hort’ thus signifying a refuge. The town funded initially one employee and this was increased to two by August of that same year.¹⁵⁵ One of the first activities of the club was, together with other parties, to secure similar financial compensation to that of the *Lastenausgleich*, awarded in West Germany to expellees in 1952, as well as similar expellee status. Following political agitation and demonstrations, an amount of 4,000 deutschmarks was given to members of clubs in January 1994 and the *Vertriebenenentschädigungsgesetz* was passed on 23 September 1994.¹⁵⁶ Subsequently many expellee club members no longer attended meetings or paid further subscriptions, apparently driven purely by financial interests.¹⁵⁷ Such demands were only part of the Altenburg club’s role however; important was the maintenance of the old culture: ‘Wir als Heimatvertriebenenverbände haben eine wichtige Zukunftsaufgabe. Zu dieser Aufgabe gehört die Pflege des Heimaterbes und Brauchtums. Denn ein Haus Europa ohne Traditionen wäre ein Europa ohne

¹⁵⁴ 10 Jahre BdV im Altenburger Land 1990-2000 booklet, pp. 1-2.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁵⁷ Interviews Steinert, Altenburg and Scholz, Weimar.

Werte.¹⁵⁸ Expellees see thus a link between past traditions and their old identity and preserving them for the future within a European context, the latter a typical aim for expellees living in east Germany. An early step was to clothe the newly established choir in *Tracht* from the old lands, combining living performance and ossified culture. Examples of *Tracht* are to be seen in glass cases in the *Heimatstube*. Due to the GDR prohibition the patterns for these had to be borrowed from Hessen and North Rhine-Westphalia and have therefore come a circuitous route and could not be claimed to be authentic. Indeed, there are very few original artefacts in the *Heimatstube*; Helga Steinert asserts that as expellees could not travel to the old territories before the *Wende*, with the exception of a short window of time in the 1970s, souvenirs could not be brought back as in the West and the flight was too fraught to bring along keepsakes.¹⁵⁹ Club members instead reconstructed artefacts. The club quickly established a Women's Centre on 20 June 1993, including a sewing circle, where dolls in replica *Tracht* were made, a way of commodifying and reconstructing the *Heimat* by the traditional creators of the *Heimat*. 'Puppen in verschiedenen Trachten der Vertreibungsgebiete originaltreu anzufertigen, war für uns eine Herausforderung, um vielen Vertriebenen die Möglichkeit zu geben, ein Stück alte Heimat nach Hause zu holen', in this way also personifying the *Heimat* in the *Tracht*-clad figure of a woman or girl.¹⁶⁰

Trips to the old territories now take place, to East Prussia, the Sudetenland and Breslau, with help often given to the people who live there,

¹⁵⁸ 10 Jahre BdV, pp. 1-3.

¹⁵⁹ Interview, Steinert. This latter point contradicts other interlocutors who prioritised souvenirs over food.

¹⁶⁰ 10 Jahre BdV, p. 6.

including some ethnic Germans who decided, and were allowed, to stay. The club receives financial and other assistance from all political parties but mainly from the CDU. Politicians from all parties are encouraged by the club to work with them in their activities, one of which was to raise funding to help refugees during the Kosovo crisis in the late 1990s.¹⁶¹ In this way expellees draw attention to their own experiences of ‘ethnic cleansing’ and stake a political claim to be part of a group of European victims, repositioning their victimhood in the process. The club also helps *Spätaussiedler*. They are proud of what they have accomplished and although nowadays they receive few visitors they are occasionally asked for help from clubs in West Germany:

Wir haben einiges erreicht, wenn auch nicht alles und deshalb sollte unsere Arbeit fortgesetzt werden. Richten wir den Blick nach vorn und noch enger als bisher sollten wir heimatvertriebene Landsleute zusammenstehen, um nicht ein zweites Mal vertrieben zu werden nämlich aus der Geschichte.¹⁶²

This metaphor is one used often by expellees, who feel that expellee identity and the portrayal of their history might be lost, just as the lands were. As I noted in Chapter Two, Kittel’s study argues similarly but unsustainably, that expellee cultural identity was suppressed at times in German public history and memory, thereby potentially driving out the expellees a second time. The Altenburg *Heimatstube* is a creation of the contemporary socio-political climate. It indicates a clear effort by expellees to publicly present their identity, not just in a regional setting but positioned within a wider European context.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 12.

6. The Hybrid Monument and Museum: Der Neue *Altvaterturm*

My final analysis in this chapter concerns a hybrid memorial space, the *Altvaterturm*, a monument and museum in one. Established post-*Wende* in east Germany in 2004 it strives for a neutral and balanced depiction of historical events in line with the contemporary cultural memory landscape, yet its claim of balance and neutrality can scarcely be credited.

Although memorials and exhibitions have generally been regarded as discrete creative outputs, whereby monuments are usually fixed, made of one durable material and address the sense of sight, and exhibitions can be less fixed, made of multiple materials and multi-media in nature, their boundaries are now becoming more blurred.¹⁶³ This is exemplified by the travelling Grey Bus monument at Pirna, discussed in Chapter Three and the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, which has an exhibition beneath it, or indeed by the *Altvaterturm* with its combination of monumental characteristics and exhibition space within. In its ambitious fusion of monument and museum the *Altvaterturm* has the opportunity to combine positive characteristics of both genres, to be long-lasting and relate a substantial, contextualized historical account as part of a memorialisation process.

‘Der neue Altvaterturm – ein Mahnmal gegen Vertreibung, eine Erinnerungs- und Begegnungsstätte, ein Ort der Versöhnung, ein touristisches Schaufenster am südöstlichen Rennsteig’ was officially opened on 28 August 2004.¹⁶⁴ The old *Altvaterturm*, initially erected in 1904 in Sudeten-Silesia, was neglected following the expulsions; the land had become part of Czechoslovakia and it was eventually demolished. The new *Altvaterturm*,

¹⁶³ Paver, Chloe, ‘From Monuments to Installations: Aspects of Memorialization in Historical Exhibitions about the National Socialist Era’ in Niven and Paver, pp. 253.

¹⁶⁴ *Der neue Altvaterturm* leaflet.

funded by expellee donations, was erected on the Wetzstein, alongside the old German-German border with Bavaria. A handout at the site indicates that the tower is a ‘Mahnmal für nachfolgende Generationen’ and a ‘Baustein für ein gemeinsames europäisches Haus, in dem übersteigter Nationalismus, Intoleranz, Völkerhass und Willkür keinen Platz haben’. It also links the expulsions to the Nazi regime:

Mit dem Wissen dieser geschichtlichen Wahrheit war die Vertreibung ein radikaler antidemokratischer Akt zu Lasten einer Volksgruppe, genau wie zuvor die Besetzung dieser Gebiet durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland ein Akt der Aggression und Annexion war. Leidtragende waren die Menschen, die in diesen Gebieten lebten.¹⁶⁵

This rhetoric separates Nazi Germany from the people of this region, in an apparent attempt to deflect blame. Notwithstanding the ostensible aims of conciliation and cross-boundary portrayal of European history the *Altvaterturm* is a gigantic monument and *Heimatstube* in one edifice that focuses overwhelmingly and exclusively on crimes committed against Germans and German suffering, even to the point of explicitly (and apparently without reflection) comparing German victims to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

The tower stands 35.8 metres tall on an area of 11.2 by 14.5 metres and its inner space consists of around 3,000 square metres (Figure 50).¹⁶⁶ Its top reveals glorious views of the surrounding Thuringian forest and sixteen sculptures symbolise the ‘16,000,000’ expellees,¹⁶⁷ a contested and here

¹⁶⁵ Rimpl, Willi, *Ein Zeichen der Versöhnung. Der Altvaterturm auf dem Wetzstein*.

¹⁶⁶ *Der neue Altvaterturm* leaflet.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

rather inflated figure.¹⁶⁸ Around its base are several large plaques that commemorate various German expulsions.



Figure 50. *Altvaterturm*

The cellar houses a chapel, dedicated to St. Elisabeth of Thuringia, and the walls are covered with small sandstone plaques, each of which signifies a German settlement, now lost, with population numbers and numbers of those killed during the expulsions; for instance, ‘Reichenau, Böhmen, 984 Einwohner, 110 Gefallenen u. Vermißte, 14 Willküropfer’. The choice of the latter word emphasises the arbitrary nature of their victimhood. The chapel acts as a holy space, akin to the feeling generated often by war monuments. The intensity of the focus on the dead, the missing and the victims in such a religious setting heightens the emphasis on the suffering of German victims.

¹⁶⁸ See my introductory chapter, p. 10.

As Koselleck's study of war memorials notes: 'Denkmäler samt ihren Zeichen und Inschriften wurden zu geheiligten Orten, die, kultisch gepflegt, den Stiftern und ihren Nachfahren dazu dienten, sich in der Erinnerung an die Toten wiederzufinden'.¹⁶⁹

A restaurant occupies the ground floor and on several levels above are small rooms used for display of *Heimat* or historical material. One room portrays the history of East Prussia with typical posters of famous people, manor houses and beautiful landscapes. Another displays the events of flight and expulsion and a further the history of the *Altvaterland*. Many plaques hang on the stairways showing paired coats of arms of *Patenschaften*, as well as space dedicated to small family plaques. One large tablet shows victims from one town, headed up under three columns: 'In Angst versetzt, gedemütigt, entrechtet, vertrieben; gepeinigt, vergewaltigt 1945 in Freudenthal; erschlagen, erschossen in Zwangsarbeit umgekommen'. Here is visible an astonishing catalogue of the vocabulary of suffering, an almost excessive and melodramatic claim for victimhood on a level with the Holocaust.

The BdV-Thuringia room, which resembles a *Heimatstube*, contains an exhibition entitled *Europa und die Deutschen* that details the history of the eastern territories and how Germans, who brought culture to the regions, lived often as minority groups in harmony with the majority groups. Its conclusion begins: 'Der in den letzten beiden Jahrhunderten aufkommende übersteigerte Nationalismus und furchtbare Kriege beendeten dieses friedliche und nützliche Miteinander, endete schließlich mit der Vertreibung. [...]', using a

¹⁶⁹ Koselleck, Reinhart, 'Einleitung' in *Der politische Totenkult: Kriegerdenkmäler in der Moderne* ed. by Reinhart Koselleck and Michael Jeismann (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1994), pp. 9-20 (p. 9).

broad historical scope and a culmination of wrongs in a teleology that does not include the Holocaust. The word ‘aufkommende’ also sounds quite vague, as if the nationalism suddenly sprang up almost by itself. The narrative continues:

Gewachsene Kulturen wurden zerstört. Oft war die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevölkerung auch ein Nachteil für die Bevölkerung der Vertreiberländer. Nun ist Europa zusammengewachsen. Besonders die junge Generation denkt über die Geschichte ihrer Heimat nach und erinnert sich an die deutsche Vergangenheit. [...] So soll auch diese Ausstellung daran erinnern, dass sich Ereignisse, wie sie während und nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg geschehen sind, nie mehr wiederholen.

Such an approach appears to suggest German superiority and avoids any acceptance of blame for the nationalism, wars and crimes, but rather focuses on Germans as victims. It alludes to the discredited German past but does little to acknowledge German responsibility. Certainly it must be difficult when working in such a highly politicised arena as an expellee club, as expellees generally feel they have been unfairly punished for the crimes of Nazism and the intention to portray Germans within a European context is often used as a way of resolving the difficult knots of German commemoration. Erfurt BdV club employees strive to balance expellees’ views with the political climate around them or their funding would be withdrawn. For example, they recently had to remove a postage stamp from their booklet of famous people commemorated by the *Deutsche Post*. Königsberg-born writer Agnes Miegel is now discredited, as she wrote a poem for Adolf Hitler.¹⁷⁰ The effect achieved by this particular exhibition, however, is historical relativism. According to this reading of history, the expulsion happened apparently for no reason and was a problem, a

¹⁷⁰ Interview, Schütz.

disadvantage, not only for Germans but also for the people who expelled them.

Three noteworthy pamphlets amongst many are to be found at this site, presumably to give additional information to interested visitors. One leaflet accompanies a plaque at the site that commemorates the ‘Massaker und Schandtaten an Sudetendeutschen’. ‘Beraubt, Gequält, Ermordet, Vertrieben aus der angestammten Heimat’ reads the inscription, once again with a striking excess of affect, and details of the events are described as well as showing a photograph of a plaque erected as a memorial in the cemetery of Postelberg, now Postoloprty in the Czech Republic. Unveiled on 3 June 2010 through the *Heimatkreis* Saaz/Žatec the plaque reads: ‘Allen unschuldigen Opfern der Postelberger Ereignisse von Mai und Juni 1945’ plus its equivalent in the Czech language. No reference is made to German crimes in the region though there is evidence here of cooperative working across boundaries and an acknowledgment of shared history. Nevertheless, the emphasis remains on German suffering and rather explicit ‘innocent’ victimhood.¹⁷¹ ‘Die deutsche Stadt Aussig und ihr Ende’, a leaflet published by the *Hilfsverein* Aussig on the occasion of the opening of the *Altvaterturm* relates the history of the town, acknowledges its population over time as Slav- or German-dominated but leaves the undoubted impression that it only developed when under German domination; it gives examples from culture, trade, industry and education. The pamphlet narrates the expulsion from the area as part of the so-called ‘wild expulsions’ and tells of the massacre on 31 July 1945 when around a hundred Germans were murdered. Expellees ‘wurden zu Fuß zum Güterbahnhof

¹⁷¹ *Zur Erinnerung und Gegen das Vergessen* leaflet.

getrieben, in offene Kohlewaggons verfrachtet [...]'.¹⁷² The third leaflet, by the *Brünner Heimatbote*, reproduces an unexpurgated text by Professor Jan Mlynárik from Karls-Universität in Prague, a former member of the anti-communist resistance, in which he discusses a topic he says is taboo in the Czech Republic. He names Edvard Beneš as orchestrator of the expulsions, who allegedly said that the German question in the Czech Republic must be 'endgültig hinausliquidiert'.¹⁷³ The author claims that Beneš associated all Germans with collective guilt for Hitler, National Socialism and the war. Mlynárik asserts further that irresponsible Communist politicians encouraged revenge against the Germans to make political capital for their future regime, something he regards as 'eine Kopie der nazistischen "Endlösung"'. In Mlynárik's view there is no difference between the expulsion of the Germans and that of the Albanians from Kosovo; lessons must be learned from the expulsions of the twentieth century.¹⁷⁴ Here, as seen elsewhere are allusions that make comparisons between the treatment of the Jews and the expelled Germans inevitable as well as linking to more modern crises, humanitarian disasters and wars, an approach rather in the manner of a belated *Historikerstreit*.

It is clear that German expellees were victims, but the *Altvaterturm* does not in any way portray an evenhanded account of the past; indeed it uses a rhetoric borrowed from the discourse of human rights, including Kosovo and the Holocaust as comparable examples to stake a claim on suffering. Expellee victimhood is allowed to dominate to the exclusion of other victims,

¹⁷² Hilfsverein Aussig e.V., *Die deutsche Stadt Aussig und ihr Ende*, 2005, p. 9.

¹⁷³ *Brünner Heimatbote*, Prof. Ján Mlynárik's Vorrede zur tschechischen Ausgabe der *Dokumentation von Vorgeschichte und Verlauf des Brünner Totenmarsches*, p. 2005 A-106.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2005 A-110.

and thus the historical context is obscured. If, as it seems to suggest, the memorial is indeed one that portrays conciliation between peoples, then contextualisation should depict the history within a more balanced European setting that acknowledges German guilt and responsibility for crimes as bad, and indeed worse, than the ones portrayed here against Germans. The various exhibitions or leaflets do tend to link the expulsion to a broader European framework and in a comparative ethos; nevertheless the discourse is the same, that of Germans as victims. Opened in 2004, the memorial's latter planning and construction stages would have coincided with the widespread public debate associated with the Holocaust memorial that was inaugurated in 2005, facets of which I discussed in Chapter Two.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, in this period narratives of German suffering had resurfaced. The *Altvaterturm* demonstrates the influence of this socio-political context; it is an artefact that aims for conciliation within a wider European context, and indeed publicly acknowledges German perpetration, yet it is imbued with prominent displays of German victimhood.

7. The Phantom *Heimat*

This chapter has demonstrated how the old *Heimat* is being retained in west German *Heimatstuben* as a phantom. Exhibits are fetishised in establishments that function as shrines or sacred spaces. More objects are being donated, left by expellees in their wills and yet visitor numbers are dwindling. There are far fewer east German *Heimatstuben* and those that exist have mostly a hybrid function, a working office with some displayed artefacts, and the office

¹⁷⁵ See pages 104-5.

function mostly takes priority. They are necessarily less shrine-like in nature; their artefacts are sparse and almost blend into the office space, like wallpaper, thereby losing some of their quasi-magical power. The ‘undead’ *Heimat* preserved as in west German *Heimatstuben* is not so evident here, the past being more integrated into the present, but the way they function is an interesting attempt to create and reconstitute the old *Heimat* within the new, performing old traditions and crafts in a way that is clearly self-reflexive: these spaces contain not artefacts but simulacra of things that might have been artefacts. In this way there is still an element of retaining a replica *Heimat*.

While the amateur approach in *Heimatstuben* offers a possibility of excusable partiality this would be inexcusable in a professional museum. Nevertheless, as we have seen, *Ostdeutsche* museums are not always impartial, which I attribute to the involvement of eyewitnesses. Perhaps understandably the German contribution to eastern regions in history is represented positively, however, the lack of context in many places and lack of mention of German crimes is noticeable. In places, a pro-German balance is in evidence, leaving the impression that the myth of Germans as *Kulturträger* persists. The Lüneburg Museum, for example, displays great pride in East Prussia and its culture, omitting much contextualisation regarding the Nazi period and the fact that this region is now part Russian, part Polish; again showing traces of an ‘undead’ *Heimat*. Narrative boards that project a naïve and unreflexive nostalgia provide a historical narrative without the guilt. The *Altvaterturm* shows portrayal of German history at its most dubious and self-justificatory, where history is relativised and German victimhood placed above all else. Instead of feeling sympathy for the German

victims there is a danger that observers may dismiss any legitimate claim for commemoration. All my chosen establishments and the people involved acknowledge the need for wider European understanding and to different degrees are working towards it. However, a pro-German tendency is still noticeable.

At a time when smaller *Heimatstuben* are rethinking their futures larger museums are being founded. The ninth International Symposium of the IAMH (International Association of Museums of History) held 16-18 September 2010 in Berlin focused on ‘Flight, Expulsion and “Ethnic Cleansing”’, with a section and speakers devoted to museums of the future. This included the planned Sudeten German Museum in Munich; *Das Collegium Bohemicum* in Aussig (Ústí nad Labem), Czech Republic and the Second World War Museum, to be opened in Gdańsk, Poland in 2014, which will have a theme of forced migration as part of the exhibition. The latter museum has an aim to offset other or emerging museums, which are felt not to be representing the truth from the Polish point of view. The European museum landscape appears simultaneously both collaborative and competitive. The Aussig Museum will display Czech-German conflicts in an international context and aim to use earlier conflicts as a source of inspiration. The Sudeten German Museum in Munich wants a strong relationship with Aussig and aims to share exhibitions; above all it strives to convey the concept of *Heimat* within a context of *Mitteleuropa*. It remains to be seen whether such cooperative work is feasible; the working towards a European-oriented Centre against Expulsions, the theme of my next chapter, has so far been remarkably controversial.

To summarise, this chapter has demonstrated the tension between communicative and cultural memory, illustrating that while the latter is influential over the former, private memory, exemplified by the activities in east German *Heimatstuben*, is capable of resisting the official cultural memory. Furthermore, I have shown that museums and *Heimatstuben* are products of the contemporary socio-political context, and that *Heimat* is a core component of identity. Eisler's study of 1950s and 1960s *Heimatstuben* shows how the old *Heimat* was publicly displayed as a lost paradise to strengthen the former regional identity but noticeably without mention of the National Socialist past that may contaminate it, something that is typical of the attitude of the whole of West Germany in this period.¹⁷⁶ There was still a possibility of return at this time; the purpose of the *Heimatstuben* displays was therefore not just to show the locals the beauty of the old *Heimat* but also to convince them of the political aims of the expellees for the lands to be returned to Germany.¹⁷⁷ In 2011, the *Heimatstube* in Rendsburg's aim is still to educate the local population about the old *Heimat*, but it seeks to illustrate past history, without political revanchism. Schütze's 1994 survey shows, contrary to her presupposition that with the passage of time the fear of apparent loss of identity would diminish, that expellee identity remains strong, almost fifty years after the war's end, not just for people running the *Heimatstuben* but also for visitors.¹⁷⁸ As my last chapter will demonstrate, the desire to preserve the culture of the old East is not just an expellee issue. Substantial funding has consistently been allocated by governments of all

¹⁷⁶ Eisler, pp. 131-33.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 136-7.

¹⁷⁸ Schütze, p. 225.

political parties to *Heimatstuben*, *Ostdeutsche* museums, and other institutions to retain the identity of Germany's old eastern territories.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ See pp. 78, 103 and 226 for details.

CHAPTER 5: THE ‘STIFTUNG FLUCHT VERTREIBUNG VERSÖHNUNG’: A SUITABLE VEHICLE FOR RAPPROCHEMENT?

Unser Ziel:

Das Schicksal der deutschen Heimatvertriebenen und ihr kulturelles Erbe im kollektiven Gedächtnis Deutschlands zu verankern und Vertreibung als Mittel von Politik zu ächten. (Erika Steinbach)¹

‘Das Schicksal der deutschen Heimatvertriebenen’ is a recurring phrase in expellee discourse already noted in this thesis, the designation ‘fate’ thereby ascribing victimhood to expellees whilst removing any responsibility for the chain of events that led to the expulsions. While perhaps an understandable term for surviving expellees, who were children at the time and therefore cannot be held responsible for National Socialism, the use of the term ‘Schicksal’ in this way is problematic to describe the events of the 1940s. It exemplifies some of the complexities inherent to commemoration of these events in Germany that I discuss in this chapter, which examines the establishment of a Centre against Expulsions. This final case study illustrates a general pattern throughout my thesis regarding German expellee memorialisation of the last twenty years. It echoes issues discussed in the previous chapter on the topic of the *Altvaterturm*, a hybrid monument which aims for European reconciliation whilst stressing German victimhood in the expulsions. In this case acknowledgment of expellee suffering is particularly contentious due to the tendency of their representatives, namely the BdV, to provoke tension with Germany’s eastern neighbours.

So far the case studies in this thesis have demonstrated either how expellees have drawn on their communicative memories and have negotiated

¹ Steinbach, Erika, ‘So können Sie helfen’, <http://www.z-g-v.de/aktuelles/?id=62> [accessed 23 February 2013].

public space to commemorate their experiences by erecting monuments and founding *Heimatstuben*, or how professionally curated regional *Ostdeutsche* museums have displayed the past deploying a combination of communicative and cultural memory tropes. This chapter explores a very different case study that presents a state-authorised, official version of cultural memory, the ‘Stiftung Flucht Vertreibung und Versöhnung’ (SFVV), that was established on 30 December 2008 and which will lead to the creation of an *Ausstellungs-, Dokumentations- und Informationszentrum* in Berlin, under the auspice of the *Deutsches Historisches Museum* (DHM).²

The idea for such a centre originated from a BdV initiative. Prior to setting up a foundation in September 2000 regarding the concept of a Centre against Expulsions (*Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen*, (ZgV)), the BdV sent letters to the Polish Foreign Minister and twelve embassies; however, only the Russian ambassador replied.³ From initial apparent disinterest, debate intensified within and outside Germany as the proposal gained momentum. From mid-2003 the reaction of the elites and media in Poland reached levels of ‘unusual intensity, acidity, outrage, and viciousness’, remarkable as they were ‘uniformly negative’,⁴ and I discuss reasons why later in this chapter. Concerns about a Centre against Expulsions have mostly focused on where it would be located, and whether such an establishment would relativise German guilt, portray historical revisionism and bestow an identity on Germans as victims with little context to show their role as perpetrators. This latter point

² Henceforth referred to as the SFVV Centre.

³ ‘Unsere Stiftung Chronik’, <http://www.z-g-v.de/aktuelles/?id=39> [accessed 22 January 2013]. The form of the reply is not noted.

⁴ Lutomski, Pawel, ‘The Debate about a Center against Expulsions: An Unexpected Crisis in German-Polish Relations?’, *German Studies Review*, 27 (2004), 449-68 (p. 449).

was highlighted due to the controversial figure of Erika Steinbach, the president of the BdV, and disquiet regarding the extent to which she and the expellees would be involved in a centre.⁵ Steinbach wanted the centre to be located in ‘historical and spatial proximity’ to the Holocaust memorial,⁶ thus undoubtedly comparisons would be drawn between expellee suffering and Jewish victimhood. Critics in the press and media in Germany and Poland (notably the SPD politician Markus Meckel and the Polish intellectuals Adam Michnik and Adam Krzemeński), and the Czech Republic favoured a network of centres throughout Europe, or Breslau in Poland as preferred location.⁷

Michnik and Krzemeński argued that:

Das wäre weder ein Museum nur deutschen Leidens und deutscher Klage, das Täter zu Opfern machte, noch ein Museum der polnischen Martyrologie und Kolonisation, sondern ein Museum der Katastrophe und ein Zeichen der Erneuerung unseres gemeinsamen Europa [...].⁸

Hans-Ulrich Wehler also supported the creation of an institute in Breslau, claiming that the Centre against Expulsions must be dedicated to a ‘gemeineuropäische Katastrophe’.⁹

In 2013 two foundations run in parallel: the Federal Government SFVV, and the BdV-ZgV. The SFVV acknowledges that the latter gave rise to the former: ‘Die Koalition greift damit eine Initiative der CDU-Politikerin und Präsidentin des Bundes der Vertriebenen Erika Steinbach und des SPD-Politikers Peter Glotz auf, die unter dem Namen “Zentrum gegen

⁵ Onkelbach, Christopher, ‘Flucht und Vertreibung - Ein kluger Kompromiss’, WAZ (*Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*), 19 March 2008, http://www.presseportal.de/pm/55903/1157934/westdeutsche_allgemeine_zeitung?search=vertreibung [accessed 29 May 2012].

⁶ Salzborn, Samuel, ‘The German Myth of a Victim Nation: (Re-)presenting Germans as Victims in the New Debate on their Flight and Expulsion from Eastern Europe’ in *A Nation of Victims?* ed. by Schmitz, pp. 87-104 (p. 91).

⁷ Levy and Sznajder, p. 14.

⁸ Lutomski, p. 453.

⁹ Wehler, Hans-Ulrich, ‘Einleitung’ in *Die Flucht* ed. by Aust and Burgdorff, pp. 9-14 (p. 14).

Vertreibungen” bekannt geworden war’.¹⁰ The BdV initiative of 2000 was superseded on 4 July 2002 by the *Bundestag* decision to set up a European-oriented Centre against Expulsions.¹¹ Following years of international and domestic debate, to which I return in more detail later, the Grand Coalition of CDU, CSU and SPD, decided in November 2005 to erect a ‘sichtbares Zeichen’ in Berlin ‘um [...] an das Unrecht von Vertreibungen zu erinnern und Vertreibung für immer zu ächten’.¹² The SFVV was created in 2008 to bring that project to fruition.

Although the creation of a foundation dedicated to commemorating expulsions, one of the BdV foundation’s four key aims, is currently being fulfilled, the BdV-ZgV continues; it awards an annual *Franz-Werfel-Menschenrechtspreis*, it develops and runs exhibitions and it contributes to the SFVV.¹³ The ZgV foundation claims that its primary aim is to work in a spirit of reconciliation with Germany’s Eastern neighbours, the aim also of the SFVV. The establishment of a government-led foundation that organises exhibitions about European expulsions with the express purpose of preventing them in future might be thought to contribute to European rapprochement. This, however, does not seem to be the case. The ambition to create a centre to commemorate German expulsions has been controversial both at home and abroad from its first mootings.

Rapprochement frames the work of individual expellees who are often involved, either independently, or through BdV initiatives, in collaboration

¹⁰ ‘Stiftung, Chronologie’, <http://sfvv.de/de/stiftung/chronologie/chronologie> [accessed 22 January 2013].

¹¹ ‘Unsere Stiftung, Chronik’.

¹² ‘Stiftung, Chronologie’.

¹³ ‘Unsere Stiftung, Aufgaben und Ziele’, <http://www.z-g-v.de/aktuelles/?id=35> [accessed 29 May 2012].

with Czechs or Poles in the old territories, like the rebuilding of old churches or dilapidated German graveyards or the erection of monuments.¹⁴ For example, the BdV-Thuringia produces educational material, undertakes school visits in Poland to promote that material, and arranges youth exchanges.¹⁵ I noted the concurrent erection of eight memorials in Romania with one in Landshut, Bavaria in Chapter Three. A report of the Commissioner for Culture, 18 April 2012, details 137 projects undertaken by expellees, for which funding of 843,000 euros was awarded in 2009 and 2010:

Dies sind vor allem Projekte, die der Verständigung und Aussöhnung sowie der Zusammenarbeit zwischen den deutschen Heimatvertriebenen und den Völkern Ostmittel-, Ost- und Südeuropas dienen, sofern sie geeignet erscheinen, das friedliche Miteinander mit unseren östlichen Nachbarn und die europäische Einigung zu fördern.¹⁶

All this activity takes place within a framework of reconciliation. Why then, does it appear so difficult to work on a scheme with a European focus to produce a centre that aims to prevent future expulsions? I argue that although it is possible for Germans, Czechs and Poles to engage harmoniously in collaborative projects that address the expulsions at an individual or local level, when debate moves into a national arena where the interaction of memory and history will be publicly laid out in the form of cultural memory, the tensions between eyewitness accounts of historical events, professional history and European national identities undermine the aim of rapprochement. In this chapter I first discuss the tension between communicative and cultural memory before examining official historical representations of German, Polish and Czech national memories. I then consider the relationship between the BdV and Germany's neighbours before detailing the former's proposal for

¹⁴ Expellee interviews and literature of the BdV-Thuringia.

¹⁵ Interview Schütz. Examples in the chapter on monuments.

¹⁶ 'Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Maßnahmen', p. 27.

a Centre against Expulsions (ZgV) and the ensuing controversies. I finally outline the work of the SFVV. By discussing aspects of the international debate over the years of planning for the centre I will show that traces of the ‘Germans as *Kulturträger*’¹⁷ ideology survives in a reconfigured form, and that the conceptualisation of ‘Germans as victims’ remains problematic. I argue that as long as the BdV continues to be aligned with the SFVV the aim for European rapprochement through this vehicle may not be fulfilled.

1. Communicative and Cultural Memory

The SFVV Centre integrates German eyewitnesses’ communicative memory of the expulsions into a wider European historical framework. In this context, where cultural and communicative memories of different nations interact, carefully constructed individual and national identities are being challenged. Such challenges take place within a field of international relations where there is a contemporary power imbalance; Germany is the dominant political and economic partner of those nations which expelled the German population.

Chapter Two discussed the resurgence of public discourse about German suffering and an increase in family stories about life in National Socialist Germany since the mid-1990s. For example, W. G. Sebald’s series of lectures *Luftkrieg und Literatur* published in 1999, Jörg Friedrich’s publication *Der Brand* (2002), a study which details the Allied bombing of civilians, and Günter Grass’s novella *Im Krebsgang* (2002) appeared as part of the revival of German victimhood narratives and the introduction to this thesis noted recent films, drama, documentaries and literature about flight and expulsion

¹⁷ This notion was introduced in the previous chapter.

and the old *Heimat*. The ‘increasingly emotionalised approach to history’ in this period coincided with ‘both a pluralisation of historical narratives [...] and a globalisation of Holocaust memory’ resulting in ‘a trend towards an international victim culture’.¹⁸ After the Cold War, argue Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, the Holocaust is now part of a European ‘cosmopolitan’ memory, ‘dislocated from space and time’ and ‘considered in absolutely universal terms’ in a discourse about human rights.¹⁹

In Germany, interest in flight and expulsion seems greater than ever. Between 1945 and the mid-1950s, Germany’s population as a whole increased by around 20% due to the influx of expellees, therefore a significant proportion of today’s population are descended from expellees and have absorbed details about their plight through discussion with family members. Some are active in the old territories, participating in international youth exchanges or working in *Heimatstuben* or through personal encounters with Poles and Czechs when they accompany parents or grandparents on their *Heimatreisen* to the East. People who experienced the expulsions are now reaching the end of their lives. Surviving eyewitnesses were children at the time, the oldest having been teenagers. While teenagers are able to experience and remember the events, babies or very young children will ‘remember’ in the main what they have since been told about the events; nevertheless, some clearly still feel a personal and powerful connection with them. Many expellees are keen to have their experiences publicly acknowledged. In a discussion of contemporary cultural memory Müller argues that: the ‘current culture of memorialisation and musealisation’ has resulted in a ‘culture of

¹⁸ Schmitz, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

¹⁹ Levy and Sznaider, pp. 5-6.

pure sentimentality' where 'groups are eager to have the dignity of their individual historical experience recognised – precisely in the way they have lived through it and present it now'.²⁰

Since unification of the two German states discussion of the crimes perpetrated by Germans under the National Socialist regime has become a matter of public discourse, embedded in a culture of contrition as I noted in Chapter Two, and the nation publicly and prominently commemorates the regime's victims. As a prime example the Holocaust memorial, occupying 19,000 square metres and incorporating 2,700 huge stelae, lies between the Brandenburg Gate and Potsdamer Platz. The monument design and location was approved on 25 June 1999 after almost ten years of debate and it opened to the public on 10 May 2005.²¹ Discussed at the same time as the Holocaust memorial and symptomatic of the difficulties regarding German commemoration of victims of National Socialism, the monument to the Roma and Sinti victims of the Nazi regime situated between the *Reichstag* and the Brandenburg Gate was not inaugurated until seven years later on 24 October 2012.²² While discussion about German victims of World War Two such as the expellees, is nowadays commonplace, the topic is always a delicate issue. Expellees were part of the nation that embraced National Socialism, therefore are associated with its appalling crimes, but they also suffered as a consequence of the regime.

²⁰ Müller, pp. 16-17.

²¹ 'Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas', <http://www.stiftung-denkmal.de> [accessed 9 November 2012]. For a summary of the debate see Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, pp. 194-232.

²² 'Denkmal für die im Nationalsozialismus ermordeten Sinti und Roma Europas', <http://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/denkmaeler/denkmal-fuer-die-ermordeten-sinti-und-roma.html#c952> [accessed 9 November 2012].

The SFVV Centre functions as an institution of cultural memory; as part of ‘objectified culture [...]’, the texts, rites, images, buildings, and monuments that are designed to recall fateful events in the history of the collective [...] the officially sanctioned heritage of a society [...]’.²³ As such, the SFVV’s exhibitions that portray the history of expulsions will legitimise a particular reading of the past with normative force. The SFVV Centre’s focus actively seeks to foster an empathetic reconnection with the victims of past suffering; by exhibiting personal cultural artefacts, witness testimonies and diaries etc., namely phenomena of the communicative realm which are appropriated in a cultural memory of the expulsions. Such techniques appear to exemplify Müller’s ‘sentimental culture’. Nevertheless, there exists a tension between this approach and one that is grounded in historical research. Today, memorial sites, museums and exhibitions all tend to emphasise the importance of integrating historical research into ‘memory’ in order to validate or legitimise their message; however, as my chapter on museums demonstrates this has varying degrees of success. The way German victims’ memories are publicly framed is crucial, especially for nations who suffered due to National Socialism.

2. Myths and Memories: Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic

The plan for a Centre against Expulsions was politically controversial from the outset, within Germany and also in neighbouring countries which expelled their German population. In this section I will consider older historical

²³ Fogu Claudio and Wulf Kansteiner, ‘The Politics of Memory and the Poetics of History’ in *The Politics of Memory* ed. by Lebow, Kansteiner and Fogu, pp. 284-310 (p. 300).

tensions between Germany and its eastern neighbours before discussing the contemporary developments.

The ideology of Germans as *Kulturträger* in South and Eastern Europe was widespread amongst a number of historians, writers and theorists in the nineteenth century and through the German *Drang nach Osten* the civilised 'West' was seen as being responsible for cultivating the uncivilised 'East'.²⁴ The academic discipline of *Ostforschung* developed into irrational social-Darwinist thinking about race that was radicalised under the Nazis.²⁵ Pro-Nazi German groups in the Sudetenland used this concept of German superiority as a basis to agitate against the majority rule. Exponents of this theory included the historian Theodor Schieder, a proponent of racially inflected *Volksgeschichte* and who led the project to gather expellee eyewitness testimonies in the immediate postwar period that I discussed in Chapter Two, and the politician and ex-Nazi Theodor Oberländer, who was Minister for Expellees, Refugees and the War-Damaged in Adenauer's Cabinet between 1953 and 1960. In Wolfgang Wippermann's discussion of the *Drang nach Osten* he shows how the term has been used by historians, both German and Slav, to suggest the East was an object of German expansionism for centuries, from the Middle Ages to the time of the Third Reich.²⁶ Wippermann concludes that the claim of an unbroken continuity of German aggression is incorrect, and that the theory of a German *Drang nach Osten* is an ideological

²⁴ Burleigh, Michael, *Germany turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 5-6.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 6-8.

²⁶ Wippermann, Wolfgang, *Der 'deutsche Drang nach Osten': Ideologie und Wirklichkeit eines politischen Schlagwortes* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981), p. 44. Norman Davies points out that Poles also participated in the *Drang nach Osten*, in their case colonising and mingling with the Letts, Ruthenes, Romanians and Tartars, something the modern-day Poland is not keen to recall. Davies, Norman, *Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland's Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 247.

construct.²⁷ Through its repeated invocation over centuries by historians, and in historical novels, school lessons, history books, national ceremonies, monuments, buildings, pictures and symbols the term shaped and spread into collective consciousness, even though it was not consistent historical reality, but rather episodic in character.²⁸ The term is more applicable as an ideology of German colonialism, the reality of German economic and political dominance in the region since the late nineteenth century remains indisputable: it is an ideology based on material reality, and the Nazi occupation appears to epitomise it. Traces of the *Drang nach Osten* notion thus remain pervasive in both German and Slav cultures, and continue to shape German-Slav interaction.

Commentators in Poland and the Czech Republic are conscious of the fact that the idea for a Centre against Expulsions originated from German expellees who see themselves as victims. In turn, these expellees were part of the Nazi regime which had practised expulsion, carried out unspeakable crimes and was responsible for the Second World War that created countless victims of terror. The German population in the eastern regions had notably welcomed National Socialism.²⁹ Andrew Demshuk's study discusses the above-average support given to the Nazi party in Silesia engendered by the 'sense of national powerlessness' associated with the 1921 plebiscite, economic factors such as reduced unemployment after 1933, and also due to

²⁷ Wippermann, p. 133.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 140-41.

²⁹ Naimark discusses the 'widespread Sudeten German sympathy for and participation in the Nazi occupation'. Naimark, Norman M., *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 112. Urban notes that around 40% of the population of the German East provinces voted for the NSDAP in 1933, p. 13.

anti-German actions in interwar Poland.³⁰ Germans and Czechs had not particularly lived harmoniously together in the Czechoslovakia that was formed in 1918 but after the election of Edvard Beneš as president in 1935 the already passionate Czech nationalism hardened and fuelled renewed radicalism amongst the German minority, although German extremism was not purely a reaction to Czech nationalism, but rather grew following the Nazi rise to power in 1933.³¹ Konrad Henlein and his Sudeten German Nazi party won two-thirds of the vote in German regions of Czechoslovakia in 1935.³² According to Naimark, this resulted in all Germans in the region being tarnished by the same reputation of anti-Czech and pro-Hitler sentiments.³³ Ahonen notes that Nazism exploited the discontented German minorities in Poland and Czechoslovakia after the First World War settlement and by the outbreak of World War Two ‘a widespread impression existed [...] that the German minorities had constituted a treacherous, destabilising, and ultimately pro-Nazi force in inter-war politics’.³⁴

The Nazis’ ‘Heim ins Reich-Politik’, whereby *Volksdeutsche* were to be ‘brought home’ into space cleared by the removal and systematic mass murder of Jews, began years before World War Two.³⁵ The *Generalplan Ost* of 1940-42 outlined how up to fifty million people would be expelled or exterminated over some thirty years.³⁶ Throughout the war in the whole of Poland between 5.5 and 6 million people from a population of thirty-five million were killed, and around half of these were Jews. This equates to a

³⁰ Demshuk, p. 47.

³¹ Douglas, pp. 11-12.

³² Ibid., p. 13.

³³ Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, p. 112.

³⁴ Ahonen, p. 22.

³⁵ Brumlik, p. 20.

³⁶ Douglas, p. 41.

mortality rate of between 160 to 170 people out of every thousand. In Czechoslovakia this proportion was twenty-one out of every thousand.³⁷ The brutal treatment of Poles and Czechs by the Nazis remains at the cusp of their living memory.

In the so-called 'wild' expulsions, which occurred mostly prior to the Potsdam Agreement of July/August 1945, Poles and Czechs took their revenge on Germans for crimes committed against their countrymen and many Germans were killed. An outcome of the Potsdam Conference was to 'humanely' expel Germans from their eastern territories. Nevertheless, the Allied decision of 1945 was not taken in a vacuum. The Czech and Polish governments in exile in London had lobbied unceasingly for Germans to be expelled from their territories from the early war years.³⁸ Beneš in particular had agitated for removal of German minorities in Czechoslovakia, his view strengthened by the German massacre at Lidice as reprisal for the murder of Reinhard Heydrich in 1942.³⁹

Following the expulsions the Polish and Czech governments 'de-Germanised' the lands. Many Poles were also expelled from their homes in the east of Poland and moved forcibly west, as the Polish border was pushed westwards to award its eastern parts to the Soviet Union.⁴⁰ German streets were renamed, their signs erased, gravestones removed or desecrated and German books were burned.⁴¹ In the Cold War climate of communist Eastern

³⁷ Urban, p. 94. Polish loss of life represented a casualty rate of 18% of the total population compared with 0.9% in Great Britain, 7.4% in Germany and 11% in the USSR. Davies, *Heart of Europe*, pp. 55-56.

³⁸ Brumlik p.19.

³⁹ Douglas, pp. 21-23.

⁴⁰ Agreed at Potsdam. 2.1 million Poles, namely 10% of the population were affected between 1945 and 1950. Ther, pp. 12-13.

⁴¹ Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, p. 134.

Europe Germans were generally regarded with suspicion; however, two categories of Germans emerged in Polish discourse, the ‘revanchists’ of West Germany and the ‘fortschrittlichen Antifaschisten’ of the GDR.⁴² In the Polish press and in schoolbooks the notion of ‘Polish earth’ was discussed, with satisfaction that the lands had been restored to the Motherland.⁴³ The repatriation of the Germans, as it was called, or transfer, was seen as an act of historical justice, engendered by the Allies alone, thereby freeing the Polish nation from responsibility.⁴⁴ Polish war memory was generally framed on assumptions that Poles were victims and resistance heroes.⁴⁵ Other than in official propaganda, however, the expulsions in general were subject to a taboo at a public political level, and in education, for decades.⁴⁶ Only with the rise of Solidarity between 1980 and 1989 were Poles able to openly question the official versions of the past, and from 1989 private memories merged into a changing public collective memory.⁴⁷ This latter context saw a clash of old and new Polish mindsets in debates about the expulsions.⁴⁸ In the border agreements of 1990/91 the terminology used was that of expulsion, not transfer or resettlement, which, according to Pawel Lutomski, caused Poles, both academics and the general public, to consider for the first time whether their countrymen had actually participated in ethnic cleansing.⁴⁹

The expression ethnic cleansing was first widely used with regard to the Balkan Wars from 1992. Genocide was distinguished by an intention to

⁴² Urban, p. 180.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 181.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 182.

⁴⁵ Orla-Bukowska, Annamaria, ‘New Threads on an Old Loom: National Memory and Social Identity in Postwar and Post-Communist Poland’ in *The Politics of Memory* ed. by Lebow, Kansteiner and Fogu, pp. 177-209 (p. 179).

⁴⁶ Lutomski, p. 452.

⁴⁷ Orla-Bukowska, pp. 181 and 191.

⁴⁸ Lutomski, p. 452.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 452.

annihilate an ethnic group, rather than, in ethnic cleansing, the effort to remove an ethnic group from a defined territory, often with all traces of its history in the area. Naimark considers the difference between the two concepts to be important: genocide involves the intention of murder from the outset. However, he believes that ethnic cleansing can often turn genocidal, due to the violence involved in forced deportation.⁵⁰ He outlines what he deems to be the characteristics of the phenomenon. Ethnic cleansing is usually related to war; it involves brutal, personal violence against innocent, unarmed individuals. It is totalistic in quality; entails crimes against property; and seeks to eradicate memories of people's presence. Furthermore, it is inherently misogynistic in nature.⁵¹ All these features occurred in the expulsion of Germans (and indeed in many other conflicts): expulsion was undoubtedly a vicious event; however, it was not planned and executed as genocide, unlike the Holocaust. People were not intentionally murdered *en masse* according to national orders although the effect was lethal for numerous people. Notwithstanding this, there are examples of deliberate executions of Germans at a local level in Poland and in Czechoslovakia. The documentary film *Töten auf Tschechisch* by David Vondracek, for example, describes the events in June 1945 where at least 763 men were rounded up and executed in Postelberg (today Postolprty). Amateur film within the documentary shows also the execution of more than forty German civilians in the Prague district of Borislavka on 10 May 1945. The documentary was shown on prime-time channel CT2 on Czech television in May 2010, and unleashed much public

⁵⁰ Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, pp. 2-4.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-98.

discussion.⁵² Thousands of opinions left on the Internet forum of the television channel ranged from ‘Die Hinrichtung von unbewaffneten Zivilisten ist ein Kriegsverbrechen’ to ‘Das war nur die kleine Rache dafür, was uns die Deutschen angetan haben’.⁵³ The article notes that countrywide the Czechs see themselves firstly as victims of the Nazis and secondly as victims of Communism; thus the film has touched ‘ein heikles Kapitel’,⁵⁴ although the broadcast of this film does suggest a more self-reflexive Czech appropriation of the past. Spontaneous local action against Germans was also complemented by organised action by the police or militia, such as the three hundred ethnic Germans killed at Kaunitz College in Brno, or on camp commandants’ orders as in Lambinowice, Poland, where 6,500 inmates died.⁵⁵ Poles were also perpetrators of crimes against Jews in the Jedwabne and Kielce pogroms, events that additionally tarnish Polish memories of themselves as martyrs or heroes,⁵⁶ and the fact that such debates can now take place challenges established narratives. According to Douglas, very few acts of violence against Germans were locally instigated; the ‘so-called “wild expulsions” were in almost every case carried out by troops, police and militia, acting under orders and more often than not executing policies laid down at the highest levels’.⁵⁷ Ther claims that retaliation by Poles and Czechs was partly generated by hatred against the Germans for what they had done in the war but that this was also given impetus by politically driven orders. He cites the excesses of the Czech revolutionary guards and also the leaders of

⁵² Lemke, Jakob, ‘Tschechischer Film zeigt Gräuel gegen Deutsche’, *Münchener Merkur*, May 2010.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Douglas, pp. 96-98.

⁵⁶ Orla-Bukowska, p. 197.

⁵⁷ Douglas, p. 94.

the Polish Second Army who ordered: ‘mit den Deutschen so zu verfahren, wie sie mit uns verfahren’.⁵⁸ Naimark notes that the victims of ethnic cleansing are usually innocent, yet the Germans were also perpetrators, as well as victims, and this has been publicly acknowledged over a number of years. Recent public disclosure of Polish and Czech crimes against Germans upsets long-established national identities and historiographies. Many years after the fall of communism, Poland and to a lesser degree the Czech Republic, are beginning to acknowledge their part in the expulsions.⁵⁹

3. Expellees, the BdV and Germany’s Neighbours

Individual expellees obviously possess their own memories and identities. However, as the BdV acts as a public body to represent them, individual expellees can gain a reputation of being revanchist or hard-line right-wingers.⁶⁰ Many of my interlocutors believe that all expellees are regarded as revisionists, and indeed some expellees I have interviewed who are not members of expellee clubs cite this as a reason; they do not wish to be associated with the politics of the BdV.⁶¹

While German expellees yearned over time for their lost *Heimat*, Polish people who relocated to houses formerly owned by Germans worried for decades that their homes would be returned to the Germans, a situation not helped by proclamations from the BdV like ‘Schlesien bleibt unser’.⁶² Expellees were always shown in Poland as revanchist and the two expellee leaders Herbert Czaja and Herbert Hupka were better known in Poland than

⁵⁸ Ther, p. 54-55.

⁵⁹ Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, pp. 137-38.

⁶⁰ Salzborn, *Grenzenlose*, pp. 125-30.

⁶¹ Interviews with, for example Burkert, BdV Jena, Handke, Hans-Burkard Valentini.

⁶² 1985 expellee rally, see Chapter Two, p. 76.

Germany, described often as ‘Polenfresser’.⁶³ Aspects of their characters which might have improved their image in Poland like the details that Czaja and Hupka were opponents of National Socialism and practising Catholics were omitted from Polish public discourse,⁶⁴ although the fact that Hupka only called for German-Polish reconciliation after the end of the Cold War and expellee leaders including Czaja ardently preached against *Ostpolitik* would never endear them to the Poles.⁶⁵ The claim in the Expellee Charter of 1950 that expellees will forswear revenge, which might be potentially reassuring to Poles, was not publicised in Poland.⁶⁶ The document has, in fact, remained controversial since its publication. For example, when expellees commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the Charter in 2010, criticism from historians, politicians and publicists argued that the declaration that expellees will abstain from vengeance implies that expellees are in fact renouncing something to which they have a right.⁶⁷ Another formulation within the Charter claims the right to a God-given *Heimat* thus implying that the expulsion was a sin against God.⁶⁸ Micha Brumlik comments that almost without exception, the Charter’s authors and first signatories were committed Nazis who made their careers in the ‘Terrorapparat von SS und SD und waren entsprechend am Menschheitsverbrechen des Judenmordes beteiligt’.⁶⁹ A 2012 study reveals that thirteen of the first BdV committee were Nazis, a fact that left Steinbach ‘wenig überrascht’ about the result; as Willi Winkler notes, ‘das nur den erstaunen wird, der an das staatstragende Märchen vom radikalen

⁶³ Urban, p. 187.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 186.

⁶⁵ Demshuk, pp. 116 and 234.

⁶⁶ Urban, p. 187.

⁶⁷ Burk et al., p. 124.

⁶⁸ For further examples of this theological claim see Scholz, “Opferdunst”, 287-313 (pp. 300-1).

⁶⁹ Brumlik, p. 100.

Neuanfang glauben wollte'.⁷⁰ Contemporary interest in the case of the expellees and their association with National Socialism indicates that the topic still features predominantly in cultural memory. For instance, Brumlik emphasises the 'hochverräterische Haltung der meisten Sudetendeutschen gegenüber ihrem Staat'.⁷¹ Douglas, by contrast, argues that while some Germans from the East were indeed perpetrators of horrific atrocities, evidence is sparse that they were any worse than Germans as a whole,⁷² and additionally he disputes the 'axiomatic' claim that the *Volksdeutsche* were fifth-columnists.⁷³ However, the pervasive view remains that ethnic Germans in the East were Nazis,⁷⁴ and voting figures alone that I note in this thesis would seem to support that claim.⁷⁵ Douglas does point out the failure of expellees to understand what it was like living as a non-German under the 'unbridled terror' of the Nazi regime, 'liable to imprisonment, deportation, torture, or execution for any reason and at any time', while Germans lived in the East under privileged conditions even in wartime. He believes the lack of capacity to grasp this fact was a 'psychological trait' running throughout the expellee generation and that this helps to explain why they were in turn perceived without empathy in the years that followed,⁷⁶ although the revanchist proclamations of expellee leaders would also not have helped.

Returning to the Charter, expellees and BdV club officials are often proud of the document, as they believe it shows their public acceptance of

⁷⁰ Winkler, Willi, 'Studie zu Nazi-Funktionären Braune Vergangenheit des Vertriebenen-Bundes', 22 November 2012, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/studie-zu-nazi-funktionaeren-braune-vergangenheit-des-vertriebenen-bundes-1.1529813>? [accessed 21 April 2013].

⁷¹ Brumlik, p. 52.

⁷² Douglas, pp. 59 and 367.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 59-60.

⁷⁴ Ahonen, p. 22.

⁷⁵ See, for example, p. 230.

⁷⁶ Douglas, pp. 63-64. Chapter Two of this thesis notes the changing reactions towards expellees; at times they were perceived empathetically, especially in the early postwar years.

their fate.⁷⁷ However its explicit wording that the expellees' suffering is more than any other group (*am schwersten Betroffenen*) is clearly untenable in view of the suffering of Jewish victims. The Charter still appears on the BdV website as a founding declaration, thus guiding contemporary readers' views on the organisation's stance. Such continued reference to the Charter attracts criticism from Brumlik that it is a 'historisches Dokument einer Übergangsepoche, deren Bedingungen nicht mehr weiterbestehen'.⁷⁸ He links the Charter to the ZgV, claiming that the 'Volkstumskampf' enshrined in the BdV's program of 'Revanchismus und völkischer Agitation', is central to its development.⁷⁹ Here Brumlik is less convincing; the focus has changed. There are indeed many expellees who wanted their homeland back and lobbied for many years to that effect, a desire publicly backed by the main political parties until the mid-1960s to gain electoral support, although the politicians had no wish to implement any of the revisionist causes.⁸⁰ Now, in the main, expellees have no desire to return, they predominantly want to preserve their past identity and give voice to their experiences,⁸¹ but the key issue is how these experiences are framed in public discussion. As I noted in Chapter Two, an opinion poll in 1971 showed only 18% of expellees desired a return. Similarly, Demshuk's study shows that a growing mismatch between mainstream expellees and their leaders arose particularly from the mid-1960s.⁸² In his view, the expellee leaders' strident claims for 'Recht auf die

⁷⁷ Interview, Schütz.

⁷⁸ Brumlik, p. 99.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 108.

⁸⁰ Ahonen, p. 164.

⁸¹ Interviews with for example: Pippus, Rosemarie Schwenkert, Osthoff, Pagel.

⁸² Demshuk, pp. 8 and 234.

Heimat' applied to the second *Heimat* as well as the first,⁸³ although this seems unlikely given the constant stress on 'die Heimat', but more convincingly he argues that in the main expellees used *Heimattreffen* and the like not to agitate for the lands back, but rather to reconnect with their 'Heimat of memory'.⁸⁴ Use of slideshows at such events showed the transformation of the old *Heimat* making it clear to many that return was undesirable, even if it were ever permitted. Demshuk discusses how what he calls the 'Heimat transformed' became more and more 'wretched' to expellees as it came under the influence of, and tarnished by, the 'polnische Wirtschaft', the longstanding prejudice by Germans against supposed Polish 'backwardness'.⁸⁵ This allusion, in fact, tends to confirm the Polish view of Germans as 'Polenfresser'.

International debates regarding the Centre against Expulsions took place in an emotional context that included the 2004/5 sixtieth anniversary commemorations of war's end, Polish-Czech concerns about compensation claims from German expellees and applications by Poland and the Czech Republic to join the European Union, in which Germany is increasingly dominant. Apprehension about the economic and political strength of a reunified Germany and a potential revival of the *Drang nach Osten* were not limited to Poland and the Czech Republic.⁸⁶ During this period Steinbach appeared as a negative figure in the Polish press. She had, for instance, voted

⁸³ Ibid., p. 76.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 169.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

⁸⁶ See, for example, Garton Ash, Timothy, *In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (London: Vintage, 1994), pp. 380-81 and 390, Davies, Norman, *Europe: A History* (London: Pimlico, 1997), p. 1119.

against the 1990/91 treaties for border recognition.⁸⁷ In September 2003 she was caricatured in the Polish *Wprost* as a dominatrix in Nazi uniform atop Gerhard Schröder, the chancellor of the time, as a symbol of the ‘böse Deutsche’.⁸⁸ She also appeared to back the *Preußische Treuhand*, a private organisation established to deal with expellee claims for restitution and compensation, by demanding the return of expellees’ property as a condition of Poland joining the EU,⁸⁹ although she actually distanced herself from the enterprise on more than one occasion.⁹⁰ As a counter-measure to German claims, Polish politicians demanded material compensation, estimated in 2004 at 31.5 billion dollars in Warsaw alone.⁹¹ Both Horst Köhler (former Federal President) and Chancellor Schröder emphasised in Polish visits in 2004 that individual compensation claims were not part of German-Polish relations, yet it remained a topic of concern.⁹² In the Czech Republic similar tensions about German compensation claims existed, exacerbated by appeals in 2002 by the BdV and CSU politician Edmund Stoiber to repeal the Beneš Decrees (which laid down the legal framework for the expulsion of Sudeten Germans) before the country’s entry into the European Union. Lutomski argues that the emotional response to the proposed ZgV unleashed in Poland indicates that the reconciliation process between the two countries is still ‘burdened by deep historical distrust and animosities’, and furthermore, in his view, German claims for compensation feed ‘the revival of anti-German phobias and clichés,

⁸⁷ Lutomski, p. 453.

⁸⁸ Weiland, Sverin, ‘Vertriebenen-Ausstellung: Flucht und Vertreibung ziehen ins “Deutschlandhaus”’, *Spiegel Online*, 19 March 2008, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,542362,00.html> [accessed 29 May 2012].

⁸⁹ Urban, p. 193. The compensation was estimated at around 19 billion euros. Lutomski, p. 458.

⁹⁰ Niven, Bill, ‘Implicit Equations’, p. 111. Urban notes that the *Treuhand* was actually founded against Steinbach’s will, p. 176.

⁹¹ Urban, p. 194.

⁹² Lutomski, p. 459.

which is amply aided by the Polish media'.⁹³ This latter point is more likely. A key argument of this thesis is that, ultimately, memories are refreshed by the current socio-political climate, thus the reactivation of public discourse on German suffering inflamed by tactless public comments from expellee representatives has disrupted gradually strengthening and more harmonious German-Polish relations.

4. The BdV Proposal and the Controversies

In this section I first examine the BdV's aims for a ZgV before considering the controversies that stemmed from that proposal. The BdV foundation to create a Centre against Expulsions was set up to concentrate on the fate of fifteen million German expellees, making their 'destiny' just as tangible (*erfahrbar*) as that of the four million *Spätaussiedler*, who resettled from the 1950s - above all from the 1980s – as well as those leaving the GDR, providing a very broad spectrum indeed.⁹⁴ Such encapsulation of people with completely different experiences and from different generations is problematic and the representation of their histories in any sort of forum would have to be separately addressed. They are not comparable, but it seems that the stance of the BdV is to link the specific expellee case to other historical events involving refugees or ethnic cleansing. Although the BdV foundation stresses the aim of achieving reconciliation with neighbouring lands, the text's outlined objectives from the outset elide the difference between expulsion and genocide.⁹⁵ By using such a parallel, that all are victims of genocidal policies, the suffering of German expellees is amplified

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 450-51.

⁹⁴ 'Unsere Stiftung, Aufgaben und Ziele'.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

which makes comparison with the Holocaust inevitable. Additionally, the proposal includes expellee integration as a theme, thereby emphasising the individual experience, illustrating both the suffering of expellees, and also the capabilities and ‘know-how’ that expellees brought with them to benefit the future society of West Germany. The language used is emotive; for instance it speaks of ‘die Integration Millionen entwurzelter Landsleute’,⁹⁶ in an organic metaphor alluding to the roots of the *Heimat*. Furthermore, it seeks to depict European expulsions and genocide as a whole entity, and although the text of this task for the ZgV sets out the context of National Socialism, it repeatedly casts Hitler as responsible for the events, thereby seeming to absolve other Germans from blame, a device seen in post-World War Two totalitarian accounts in West Germany, as I outlined in Chapter Two. The text does indicate that all victims will be represented, and that its core function is to promote human rights.⁹⁷ However, concerns regarding exhibitions constructed by expellees persist. For example, a previous exhibition run by expellees in 2006, ‘Erzwungene Wege’ prompted criticism in Poland, the Czech Republic and the left-liberal press in Germany as it disregarded historical cause and effect in the way that it aligned the German expulsion to that of the Armenian genocide. Moreover, although it made reference to the expulsion of Jews it failed to make clear that Jews died in their millions.⁹⁸

The contentious issue of the Centre’s location was solved in 2008 with Federal Government approval for the creation of the SFVV Centre to be located in Berlin. The defeat of the Red-Green alliance in 2005 and its replacement by the Grand Coalition that included the CDU (a long-term

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Steinbach is the spokesperson for human rights of the CDU/CSU faction.

⁹⁸ Niven, ‘Implicit Equations’, pp. 113-22.

supporter of the BdV) had already paved the way for Berlin as a location. Poland's objections were eventually waived with a change of government from one headed by the Kaczyński twins to Donald Tusk as leader; however the latter wanted no part in the project, other than indicating that Polish academics were free to take part if they wished. Nevertheless this seemed an unlikely prospect in 2008, as most were still concerned about insufficient context being portrayed which would amount to historical revisionism.⁹⁹

Ratification of the SFVV Centre, which will cost around thirty million euros, plus annual running costs of 2.4 million euros, found widespread support across the political parties, although the Greens were concerned about the BdV and Steinbach's involvement in the project,¹⁰⁰ rightly so as later events demonstrate. *Die Linke*, however, criticised it, claiming it opened 'den Weg in staatlich subventionierten Geschichtsrevisionismus'.¹⁰¹ The chosen location in Berlin was the *Deutschlandhaus* on Stresemannstraße, which although only a half-kilometre from Potsdamer Platz was felt to be sufficiently out of the centre as to not be operating in competition with the Holocaust memorial, a point of previous contention.¹⁰² Steinbach was delighted with the decision: 'Damit werde "ein bislang weißer Fleck in der Gedenkstättenlandschaft der deutschen Hauptstadt endlich bearbeitet"', a strange remark considering that Berlin is already the location for several

⁹⁹ Semler, Christian, 'Zeichen gegen Vertreibung in Sichtweite', *taz.de*, 20 March 2008, <http://www.taz.de/nc/1/archiv/print-archiv/printressorts/digi-artikel/?ressort=in&dig=2008%2F03%2F20%2Fa0061&src=GI&cHash=9253674586> [accessed 29 May 2012].

¹⁰⁰ "Zeichen" Gegen Vertreibung kommt - Kabinett macht weg für Erinnerungsstätte in Berlin frei - Vertriebene zufrieden', *Berliner Zeitung online*, 19 March 2008, http://www.berlinonline.de/aktuelles/berlin/detail_ddp_2059396490.php [29 May 2012].

¹⁰¹ 'Dokumentationszentrum über Vertreibungen beschlossen', *Welt online*, 19 March 2008, <http://newsticker.welt.de/index.php?channel=pol&module=dpa&id=17251444> [accessed 29 May 2012].

¹⁰² Lutomski, p. 455.

expellee monuments, erected over a period of many years.¹⁰³ It is, however, perhaps a reference to the fact that Jewish victims have been *prominently* acknowledged through the means of the Holocaust memorial and expellee victims have not.

SPD politician Wolfgang Thierse, *Bundestag* vice-president at the time of the SFVV decision in 2008, pronounced it a good concept, as it was not the one promoted by the BdV, rather one that was sponsored and regulated by public law.¹⁰⁴ However, there are in 2013 six expellee members on the federal project Board of Trustees, a disproportionate number with respect to other representatives.¹⁰⁵ Although it is undeniable that expellees suffered individually, the danger with the SFVV Centre is, as Salzborn comments, that a generalisation of individual memories can result which ‘ignores the political context in favour of a moralised view of the past’.¹⁰⁶

Despite attempts to consult a wide range of opinion,¹⁰⁷ parliamentary ratification of the SFVV in 2008 did not resolve the controversy. Steinbach remained a contentious figure and although many people felt it would be better for her not to be party to the SFVV Centre’s development it is unsurprising that she wanted to be involved; it was after all her idea to create

¹⁰³ “‘Zeichen’ Gegen Vertreibung kommt’. See, for example, the Madonna and child memorial discussed in the monuments chapter and also the large monument erected on Theodor-Heuss-Platz on 10 September 1955.

¹⁰⁴ Herold, Frank, ‘Zeichen gegen Vertreibungen: Kabinett beschließt Erinnerungsstätte in Berlin/ Beteiligung von BdV-Chefin Steinbach offen’, *Berliner Zeitung online*, 20 March 2008, <http://www.berlinonline.de/berliner-zeitung/print/politik/734428.html> [accessed 29 May 2012].

¹⁰⁵ The twenty-one members of the board comprise four from the *Bundestag*, two from the *Bundesregierung*, six from the BdV, two from the Protestant church, two from the Catholic church and two from the Central Jewish Council, plus the President of the DHM and the President of the *Haus der Geschichte*. ‘Stiftung, Stiftungsrat’, <http://sfvv.de/de/stiftung/stiftungsrat-0> [accessed 23 January 2013].

¹⁰⁶ Salzborn, ‘German Myth’, p. 97.

¹⁰⁷ For a useful summary see Faulenbach, Bernd and Andreas Helle (eds.), *Zwangsmigration in Europa: Zur wissenschaftlichen und politischen Auseinandersetzung um die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten* (Essen: Klartext, 2005), pp. 17-31 and 63-99.

a centre commemorating the expulsions. This was indeed shown to be an issue between November 2009 and March 2010 when debate raged about whether she should sit on the SFVV Centre's board. Her ongoing controversial remarks about Poland, the fact she spoke out against their entry into the European Union after she had voted against recognising the Oder-Neisse borders made her an unconvincing representative of the SFVV's aim of achieving reconciliation.¹⁰⁸ Protracted negotiations took place between Steinbach and Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, who eventually forced her to stand down out of concerns for German-Polish relations.¹⁰⁹ She agreed to surrender her seat on the Board of Trustees but only on condition that the quota of expellee representatives was increased from three to six.¹¹⁰ But in August 2010 there was further controversy when two BdV board members came under fire from Green and SPD politicians for harbouring revisionist views: Hartmund Saenger had declared that all European countries had 'eine erstaunliche Bereitschaft zum Krieg' in Summer 1939 and Arnold Tölg had claimed that other countries had committed crimes with respect to forced labourers similar to those of Nazi criminals.¹¹¹ Steinbach defended her colleagues and in so doing was the target of great criticism, as by implication she had endorsed these views. Such proclamations from the BdV harmed the reconciliation process intended by the SFVV Centre, maintained the

¹⁰⁸ Schuler, Katharina, "Merkel wird Steinbach verhindern" Streit um Erika Steinbach: Polen-Expertin Gesine Schwan erklärt im Interview, warum die Vertriebenen-Präsidentin für den Posten im Stiftungsrat ungeeignet ist', *Zeit online*, 16 November 2009, <http://www.zeit.de/deutschland/2009-11/schwan-interview?page=all&print=true> [accessed 24 November 2009].

¹⁰⁹ 'Vertriebenenstiftung. Steinbach: Verzicht ist Ehrensache', *Sueddeutsche.de*, 11 February 2010, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/691/502920/text/print.html> [accessed 13 February 2010].

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Gathmann, Florian, 'Neuer Ärger um Stiftung: Vertriebenerevertreter unter Revanchismusverdacht', *Spiegel online*, 3 August 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/neuer-aerger-um-stiftung-vertriebenenvertreter-unter-revanchismusverdacht-a-709903.html> [accessed 9 November 2012].

politicians, while Steinbach retorted that such claims were a manoeuvre to prevent the creation of the SFVV Centre by critics who never wanted it in the first place.¹¹² In September 2010 she was again embroiled in controversy, having publicly defamed the Polish-German Commissioner, 88 year-old Auschwitz survivor, Wladyslaw Bartoszewski as having a bad character.¹¹³ It is precisely such positions adopted by the prominent leader of the BdV that arguably taints all expellees with the reputation of being revanchist.¹¹⁴ Tölg and Saenger are no longer board members, but that may not solve the problem; other BdV representatives have taken their places, although they may not be so outspoken.

For Lutomski, Polish anxieties responded to Germany's 'misguided [...] need to forge a new identity as belatedly acknowledged victims', and critics accused Germans of attempting to 'create a false historical consciousness and selective memory' as well as 'extending the notion of universal human rights abuses retroactively, using false analogies, creating alleged new myths about the expulsions'.¹¹⁵ This dynamic process of myth (re)creation is, for Jan Assmann, integral to the function of cultural memory that continually reappropriates selective pasts in the search for normative orientation in the present.¹¹⁶ Cultural memory relies on myth creation yet such myths or homogeneous categorisations of the past are disrupted by individual memories in the form of eyewitness accounts.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ 'Deutsch-polnisches Verhältnis: Steinbach verteidigt Äußerungen über Bartoszewski', 17 September 2010, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/deutsch-polnisches-verhaeltnis-steinbach-verteidigt-aeusserungen-ueber-bartoszewski-1637256.html> [accessed 4 March 2013].

¹¹⁴ Interviews, for instance, Valentini.

¹¹⁵ Lutomski, p. 455.

¹¹⁶ Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 52.

The approved form of the SFVV Centre reflects an attempted solution of previously outlined concerns. The *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* calls the decision ‘ein kluger Kompromiss’, that locates the Centre in Berlin, but not in a prime position, and using the DHM as umbrella concern as a ‘neutral’ mediator of the past eased disquiet that any exhibition might relativise German guilt and provide insufficient context.¹¹⁷ The DHM Director Hanns Ottomeyer stressed that ‘Unser Ziel ist es, eine Ausstellung im Kontext der europäischen Geschichte zu machen, den Fokus weit auf zu machen und keine auf das Schicksal der Deutschen verengte Sicht zu zeigen’.¹¹⁸ However, in this reading the expulsions then become a European legacy. Culture Commissioner Bernd Neumann did indicate that Nazi crimes, particularly in Poland and the Czech Republic would be ‘ausreichend dokumentiert’ but also, as a sign of compromise to expellees, that ‘die Jahrhunderte währende Siedlungs- und Kulturgeschichte der Deutschen in diesen Gebieten einbezogen werden [soll]’.¹¹⁹ Great emphasis, once again, is publicly laid on *German* culture in the East. However, this is not in the sense of a return to traditional, parochial German nationalism, rather recognition that Nazi atrocities must be acknowledged in order to permit the commemoration of German culture in the former eastern territories within a European perspective.

¹¹⁷ Onklebach.

¹¹⁸ Kröter, Thomas, ‘Dokumentationszentrum: Kabinett beschließt Museum zu Vertreibung’, *FR-online.de*, 20 March 2008, http://www.fr-online.de/in_und_ausland/politik/aktuell/?sid=a78d3db3751cff477604993792d2da75&em_cnt=1306539 [accessed 29 May 2012].

¹¹⁹ ‘Kabinettsbeschluss: Dokumentationszentrum für Vertriebene kommt’, *Der Tagesspiegel*, 19 March 2008, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/deutschland/Doku-Zentrum-Vertreibungen;art122,2497506> [accessed 29 May 2012].

5. The SFVV Centre

In 2005 the CDU, CSU and SPD Coalition agreed the ‘sichtbares Zeichen’, in response to the BdV initiative.¹²⁰ However, the SFVV foundation, founded in December 2008, does not simply mirror the aims of the BdV foundation’s intentions for a ZgV. In contrast to the ZgV, the SFVV seeks to address concerns of all parties by including expellees as a source yet ensuring their subjective testimony is grounded in an academic historical framework. The SFVV places great importance on the reflexive appropriation of communicative memories and individual eyewitness testimonies of the expulsions but the latter will, for example, include those from people of ‘different generations, social classes and political opinions’.¹²¹ Additionally, they will ‘express feelings and directly speak to visitors, but they should be embedded in the larger context and their subjective nature should be made explicit’.¹²²

The SFVV proclaims a spirit of reconciliation and aims to work in partnership with German and international museums and institutions to develop both a long-term permanent exhibition and temporary exhibitions charting flight and expulsion in the twentieth century, in addition to the collection, documentation, evaluation, and dissemination of academic sources, especially eyewitness testimony.¹²³ Stress is clearly laid *not* just on German expellees and their communicative memory: ‘Flight and expulsion of the Germans shall be presented within the general context of forced migration in

¹²⁰ ‘Stiftung, Chronologie’.

¹²¹ ‘Stiftung, Grundlagenpapiere’, <http://sfvv.de/de/stiftung/grundlagenpapiere/grobkonzeption-der-bundesregierung-von-2008>, conceptual_framework_sfvv_2012.pdf, English version, [accessed 14 December 2012], p. 21.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ ‘Stiftung Flucht Vertreibung Versöhnung’, http://sfvv.de/sites/default/files/downloads/imagefaltblatt_sfvv.pdf [accessed 29 May 2012].

Twentieth Century Europe'.¹²⁴ The SFVV engages with the 'historical context of the Second World War and the National Socialist policies of expansion and extermination and their consequences', in full recognition of German perpetration.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, the recontextualisation of the Holocaust within a century of forced migration potentially diminishes its particularity. Such an approach recontextualises both the Holocaust and the expulsions and places them within a culture of universal victimhood. In the European memory culture of the twenty-first century the Holocaust is now considered in universal terms, blurred together with other occurrences of genocide and ethnic cleansing as an extreme violation of human rights.¹²⁶

The Director of the SFVV, the historian Manfred Kittel chairs an advisory board, consisting of fifteen international academic advisers who assist on scholarly matters.¹²⁷ A Board of Trustees chaired by Neumann, the Culture Commissioner determines the main programme.¹²⁸ In September 2010 Kittel set out the proposed remit for the SFVV Centre and widened this basis to a 'Konzeption für die Arbeit der SFVV und Leitlinien für die geplante Ausstellung' that was agreed by the Board on 25 June 2012. This conceptual framework makes it clear that the SFVV Centre's aim is to disseminate an official, state-authorised version of cultural memory that draws upon the evidence provided by eyewitness testimonies and professional historical research alike. The concept does not relativise German guilt, nor does it compromise issues important to expellees and the BdV. It places the SFVV

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Levy and Sznajder, pp. 5-6.

¹²⁷ Ibid. For full details see 'Stiftung, Wissenschaftlicher Beraterkreis', <http://www.sfvv.de/de/stiftung/wissenschaftlicher-beraterkreis> [accessed 23 January 2013].

¹²⁸ The BKM is directly responsible to the Chancellor's Office.

Centre firmly as a place of learning and remembrance, aiming to create a ‘site of living memory, based on the principle of dialogue, which reminds, informs and promotes understanding’.¹²⁹ It astutely uses the words of the Polish intellectual Jan Józef Lipski (1985), to guide the engagement in cross-border exchange and dialogue: ‘We must tell each other everything, on the condition that each speaks about his own guilt. If we do not, the burden of the past will keep us from moving towards a shared future’.¹³⁰ Scholarly discourse and discussion between European neighbours based on mutual understanding is desired, an aim that may be not so easy in its execution but is worth striving for.¹³¹ Potentially this would have been easier had the SFVV Centre not been located in Berlin, but in Breslau, or if it had operated as part of a wider European network of centres. The conceptual framework discusses expellee suffering, and also notes that ‘landscapes of the soul’ were lost in 1945; however, stresses that Germany lost the East as ‘a direct result of National Socialist policy’. Moreover, it goes on to say that ‘the history of flight and expulsion and the cultural heritage of the regions left behind are part of Germany’s national identity and culture of remembrance’, and should not be forgotten.¹³² Artefacts will include written and audiovisual accounts, diaries, letters and memorabilia. For example, the exhibition *Stück für Stück* which followed an international call for expellee memorabilia was displayed from 27 April 2012 to 1 July 2012 at the *Deutschlandhaus*.¹³³

Case studies are planned, which are not yet finalised, such as Upper Silesia post-1918, or Postelberg (the afore-mentioned scene of Czech brutality

¹²⁹ ‘Stiftung, Grundlagenpapiere’, p. 13.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 3.

¹³² Ibid., p. 5.

¹³³ ‘Stiftung, Chronologie’.

against Germans), or Łódź, showing ‘multiple layers of time’; the exhibition structure eschews teleology and is sensitive to the ‘fundamentally open-ended nature of historical processes’.¹³⁴ Centre planners are attempting to learn from previous misjudgements; earlier announcements of case studies have already produced controversy. Kittel’s early remit, the 2010 foundation paper, was criticised for focusing primarily on the German expulsions while concurrently aiming for reconciliation with Germany’s eastern neighbours. For instance, it suggested portraying German victims at Bromberg in the Polish Corridor in September 1939 as one of the first four case studies in the exhibition: ‘Der Krieg beginnt mit deutschen Opfern – das ist die Aussage einer entsprechenden Ausstellungs-Inszenierung’.¹³⁵ The advisory panels have been frequently subject to change as individuals have resigned their posts. Raphael Gross, the director of the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt and SFVV Centre board member discussed the resignation of three board members in 2010: the Polish historian Tomasz Szarota, the Czech historian Kristina Kaiserová and the German political journalist Helga Hirsch. Szarota had doubts about the SFVV Centre’s international orientation, Kaiserová criticised the lack of a consensual academic-historical basis and Hirsch felt it had become instrumentalised by party politics.¹³⁶ Gross felt the expellees were being represented as the biggest group of victims, that the Allies would be turned into perpetrators, and that comparisons were being drawn between the expulsion and the Holocaust.¹³⁷ Additionally, he claimed that there was a

¹³⁴ ‘Stiftung, Grundlagenpapiere’, pp. 20 and 17.

¹³⁵ Schulze Wessel, Martin, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 28 October 2010, ‘Die Vertreibungs-Ausstellung in Berlin wird Bilder erzeugen, die mehr sagen, als Tausend Worte richtigstellen können’, p. 2.

¹³⁶ Gross, Raphael, in interview with Franziska Augstein, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 11 March 2010, ‘Kosmetik hilft nicht, das Projekt braucht ein neues Fundament’, p. 13.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

wide mistrust about the BdV and the involvement of its central functionaries in National Socialism.¹³⁸ Gross's criticisms do not appear in isolation and the views he expresses have been articulated by others, at international and individual levels. Despite public claims that stress is not to be laid on German victims of the expulsion, evidence shows otherwise. The fact that six BdV members represent expellees against two representatives of the Central Jewish Council is just one stark reminder.

The SFVV Centre is based on compromise and aims to balance international tensions and domestic concerns. It involves protracted negotiations with people of different political opinions and with eyewitnesses of the events. When this also involves international tensions amongst countries that are unequal partners within Europe and which have a traumatic history the task of reconciliatory working becomes even more difficult. Through approving the SFVV as a state-authorised scheme, the state on the one hand is taking a risk and leaving itself open to international and domestic challenges with little chance to distance itself from the project. On the other hand this chosen approach gives it an opportunity to firmly steer its development. Public posturing by BdV members frequently provokes volatile reactions at home and abroad and efforts have been made to minimise their involvement in the SFVV in the interests of rapprochement. However, the SFVV Centre places a premium on the place of communicative memory in the exhibitions and inevitably expellee suffering will play a large part in this. As this thesis has demonstrated, use of eyewitness testimony can lead to the sentimentalisation of history unless this approach is appropriately

¹³⁸ Ibid.

contextualised, which the SFVV is indeed striving to apply. The BdV, however, is still proclaiming the success of ‘their’ foundation in which the ‘fate’ of expellees will be central:

Durch unsere Stiftung ist das Schicksal der Vertriebenen in der Mitte der Gesellschaft angekommen. Mit eigenen Ausstellungen, einer Niederlassung in Berlin und einer wachsamten Begleitung der Bundesstiftung ‘Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung’ werden wir weiter treibende Kraft bleiben.¹³⁹

Thus, the BdV shows every sign of perpetuating its involvement and initiating further activities which may lead to more contention. While the BdV remains involved in the project with their particular stance exemplified by the use of terminology like ‘fate’, the SFVV will remain controversial and its aim for European rapprochement may not be successful.

In summary, I have shown that the SFVV proposals still apparently show a belief to some extent in Germans as bearers of culture to the East, although this is indeed a reconfigured notion. The SFVV desires rapprochement with European neighbours but it is still trying to appease the expellees who want their experiences acknowledged and this results in the privileging of German suffering, albeit in the desire to integrate communicative memories into the reconstruction of the past. Rapprochement is not assisted as expellees are represented by the often insensitive BdV. On the one hand the approach to set the German expulsions within a European framework indicates an attempt at a common European culture of memory of victimhood. On the other hand this decontextualises the Holocaust and reduces the extent, motivations and form of German perpetration. Expellees are simultaneously individual victims of crimes against humanity and members of a collective of former perpetrators.

¹³⁹ Steinbach, <http://www.z-g-v.de/aktuelles/?id=62> [accessed 23 February 2013].

Somehow both aspects have to be represented within the SFVV Centre. The crucial question is how effectively expellee eyewitness testimony and such narratives can be incorporated, interpreted and balanced against other experiences and groups within the exhibitions of the SFVV which will take the form of cultural memory, 'the officially sanctioned heritage of a society'.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Fogu and Kansteiner, p. 300.

CONCLUSION: YEARNING FOR THE HEIMAT

Die Erinnerungen machen den Ort zur Heimat, die Erinnerungen an Vergangenes und Verlorenes, oder auch die Sehnsucht nach dem, was vergangen und verloren ist, auch nach den vergangenen und verlorenen Sehnsüchten. Heimat ist ein Ort nicht als der, der er ist, sondern als der, der er nicht ist.¹

What does my research reveal about the state of Germany's cultural memory today? The case studies investigated in this thesis have demonstrated that the two modes of communicative and cultural memory coexist and interact in the memorialisation of the expulsions. As Astrid Erll points out, this coexistence is a recurrent factor of modern memory culture that occurs in societies that are dealing with enormous changes, namely 'evoked through concurrent yet divergent modes of imagining the past'.²

In my examination of how the events of flight and expulsion and the loss of the old *Heimat* are portrayed in museums and monuments in east and west Germany I have shown that cultural memory tropes have influenced the objectified culture that reflects Germany's self-image in the particular epoch in which it was constructed. Cultural memory dominates the relationship with communicative memory as it seeks to establish the shared norms through which the individuals who are engaged in memorialisation make sense of their communicative memories of the past. I have noted that commemoration was often triggered by cultural memory; more monuments and *Heimatstuben* being founded, for example, in the mid to late 1980s to coincide with key anniversaries, and frenetic debate about the past in the West. Although many monuments were privately erected they were always negotiated through

¹ Schlink, Bernhard, *Heimat als Utopie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), pp. 32-33.

² Erll, p. 31.

public space and by permission from local authorities. They are therefore shaped by the cultural memory context of the time of erection.

For east German expellees the feeling of identity and security in connection with the old *Heimat* was suppressed and manipulated but as soon as they were free to, they formed clubs and erected monuments. Expellees were influenced by their GDR upbringing and political context, the public taboo on discussion of the old homeland and in particular the post-unification development of cultural memory. Memorials commemorated in the main all victims of war and suffering, including expellee victims, often in a context of rapprochement, and the term *Heimat* was mostly elided, being associated with revanchism and Nazism. The attachments to the old *Heimat* that were suppressed in the GDR, and their reactivation after 1990 were significantly influenced by the wider process of cultivating cultural memory for the new Germany. In west Germany the notion of *Heimat* has been refreshed and perpetuated over decades in the public sphere. In the early to mid-postwar years monument inscriptions stressed the *Heimat*, thus assisting integration as well as signalling a possibility of return. In addition they portrayed expellees as victims in line with national memory that focused on Germans as victims. Post-*Wende* monuments still, to some extent, portray expellees as victims although in places there is also evidence of rapprochement with European neighbours. They still employ *Heimat* as a theme; west German expellees apparently draw on their own continuities.

My case study of *Ostdeutsche* museums illustrates the tensions provoked by the inclusion of eyewitnesses in museal presentations. The earliest *Ostdeutsche* museum in Lüneburg, dating from 1987 in its current form and

run with more expellee involvement than later museums explicitly presents the old *Heimat* as superior and deploys problematic pro-German narrative context at times. Later museums, the ones in east Germany, are less partisan but they still, to some extent, glorify the old homeland. *Heimatstuben* represent a past world that no longer exists, where the sanctuary and distinctiveness of a lost *Heimat* can be acknowledged, albeit in phantom form. West German *Heimatstuben* preserve the old *Heimat* as undead, while east German ones replicate it by use of simulacra to stand in for the ‘authentic’ artefacts which have been lost. In both east and west Germany, memorials and museums demonstrate the encounter of two discourses, namely private, everyday memory and official, public memory. Attempts to negotiate between sometimes harmonious, sometimes uneasy, and sometimes totally clashing, confrontational views have often resulted in markedly different styles of commemoration.

Wider afield, in the previous chapter I discussed how the expulsion is still contentious between Germany and its neighbours, nevertheless the SFVV Centre will engage with the topic at a national level with the stated aim of European rapprochement. The involvement of the BdV and the communicative memory of expellees is not helping the project to achieve its aspirations. Although historical reconstruction of the past does rely upon witness accounts and everyday history it remains particularly difficult to represent Germans as victims in a European context.

Throughout the thesis I have demonstrated the durability and flexibility of the term *Heimat*. Territorial demands for a return to the old *Heimat* were indeed part of Germany’s cultural memory in the early years after the

expulsions, articulated publicly by politicians as well as expellee leaders, but I have demonstrated that most expellees from the mid to late-1960s, despite what the functionaries of their clubs were saying, desired and commemorated their old *Heimat* mostly in a symbolic form. Their talk of ‘die Heimat’ was of a constructed fantasy world. But not only expellees wanted to preserve the old *Heimat* as a construct; West Germany found it difficult to let go of the German East, a tendency exemplified by the colossal amount of funding authorised by successive governments since the early years to preserve the culture of the lost territories.³

The founding of *Patenschaften* from around 1950 was an early sign that Germans did not want to lose the East, whether as territory or as a cultural heritage. Funding for *Patenschaften* came from town and state budgets, and particularly after the BVFG of 1953 was passed West German expellees established links with suitably equivalent towns and regions in the old East whereby sponsorship enabled the rebuilding of significant buildings and graveyards, or the erection of monuments in the old *Heimat*. This was not an equal partnership, but patronage from afar.

As Chapter Two noted, the dichotomy between German victims and victims of the Germans has now been reconfigured. Although they are no longer antagonistic categories the topic it is still difficult to negotiate. Germany now feels able, and indeed wants, to commemorate its own victims as well as the victims of the National Socialist regime. This includes not only the memorialisation of German victims, but also the loss of Germany’s eastern lands. Substantial finance has been allocated over the years in West

³ See pp. 78, 103 and 226 for details.

Germany, and post-unification, to preserve the culture of the lost East within Germany. Moreover, the Commissioner for Culture website currently details vast sums of money being spent on initiatives in the former territories intended to preserve Germany's heritage. Significant amounts are being spent by this institution, not only on the preservation of the German culture of the old eastern territories within Germany in museums and *Heimatstuben*, but also in the old territories themselves. The BKM (*Der Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien*) spent 16,346 million euros on projects, institutions and staff (including six cultural consultants) relating to the old East in 2009, and 15,760 million euros in 2010.⁴ A sum of 754,000 euros was spent in 2009/10 on projects in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, and the Czech and Slovak Republics on the 'Sicherung und Erhaltung deutscher Bau- und Kulturdenkmale im östlichen Europa'.⁵ Cultural exchanges between Germany and its neighbours are promoted:

mit Bezug auf die Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa. Dabei sollen die kulturellen Traditionen wiederbelebt und insbesondere bei der jungen Generation Neugier für das geschichtliche Erbe der ehemals deutsch geprägten Gebiete im europäischen Kontext geweckt werden.⁶

The government thus demonstrates a desire to retain an influence in those lands that it sees as its legacy, analogous to the early *Patenschaften*, which sponsored regions in the East as patrons, and still do so.

The German Cultural Forum for Eastern Europe in Potsdam was founded in December 2000, financed by the BKM. In its mission statement the word

⁴ 'Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Maßnahmen', p. 5.

⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

⁶ Ibid., p. 23.

‘Erbe’ is once again prominent, pointing out Germany’s past heritage, being passed on as a legacy:

Das Deutsche Kulturforum östliches Europa engagiert sich für eine zukunftsorientierte Auseinandersetzung mit der Geschichte jener Gebiete im östlichen Europa, in denen früher Deutsche gelebt haben bzw. heute noch leben. Im Dialog mit Partnern aus Mittel- und Osteuropa will das Kulturforum die Geschichte dieser Regionen als verbindendes Erbe der Deutschen und ihrer östlichen Nachbarn entdecken und einem breiten Publikum anschaulich vermitteln.⁷

It appears as if Germany still wishes to exert influence on the old territories, not in the old ideological *Kulturträger* tradition and certainly with no linkage to a racist ideology, instead in partnership with eastern European countries, but one in which Germany, as the economically and politically most powerful nation in Europe, will probably dominate.

The yearning for the old *Heimat* is associated with nostalgia, the desire to ‘obliterate history’.⁸ As Boym notes, nostalgia is not necessarily opposed to modernity, it is coeval with it. In the context of both the nineteenth century modernisation process as well as the globalisation of the twentieth century, nostalgia is not only ‘an expression of local longing, but a result of a new understanding of time and space’.⁹ It makes ‘the division into “local” and “universal” possible’,¹⁰ which might also be applied to *Heimat*. My thesis has pointed out projects in the old territories to rebuild German cemeteries, churches and other prominent buildings in the old German style. German history and culture in the region is being promoted in schools and historical institutions. The territories may no longer belong to Germany, but traces of

⁷ ‘Über uns, Deutsches Kulturforum östliches Europa, Kurzprofil’, <http://www.kulturforum.info/de/topic/1000057.%C3%BCber-uns.html> [accessed 1 March 2013].

⁸ Boym, p. xv.

⁹ Ibid., pp. xvi-xvii.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. xvi.

traditional eastern German culture will persist in the old *Heimat*, as well as in the new *Heimat*. The German concept of *Heimat* straddles once again the local and the national but also in this case, the European.

APPENDICES

Monuments Analysis: 511 in total. 63 East and 448 West German (94 Schleswig-Holstein, 354 Bavaria). 61 Post-*Wende* West.

Locations of Monuments

State	Cemetery	Other	Total
Thuringia	24	10	34
%	70.59%	29.41%	
Saxony	5	24	29
%	17.24%	82.76%	
East totals	29	34	63
%	46.03%	53.97%	
S-H			
Post- <i>Wende</i>	1	8	9
%	11.11%	88.89%	
1970-89	1	21	22
%	4.54%	95.46%	
1945-69 and undated	11	52	63
%	17.46%	82.54%	
Total			94
Bavaria			
Post- <i>Wende</i>	11	41	52
%	21.15%	78.85%	
1970-89	26	58	84
%	30.95%	69.05%	
1945-69 and undated	116	102	218
%	53.21%	46.79%	
Total			354
West Totals	166	282	448
Post-<i>Wende</i>	12	49	61
	19.67%	80.33%	
1970-89	27	78	105
%	25.71%	74.29%	
1945-69 and undated	127	155	282
%	45.04%	54.96%	

Main Focus of Monuments

State	Overall Victims	Expellee Victims	<i>Heimat</i> Loss	Thanks to new <i>Heimat</i>	Thanks to expellees	Total
Thuringia	19	12	3			34
%	55.89%	35.29%	8.82%			
Saxony	15	9	5			29
%	51.73%	31.03%	17.24%			
East Totals	34	21	8			63
%	53.97%	33.33%	12.70%			
S-H						
Post-Wende		1	8			9
%		11.11%	88.89%			
1970-89		1	21			22
%		4.54%	95.46%			
1945-69 and undated		28	35			63
%		44.44%	55.56%			
Bavaria						
Post-Wende	1	26	20	3	2	52
%	1.92%	50%	38.46%	5.77%	3.85%	
1970-89	13	34	36	1		84
%	15.47%	40.48%	42.86%	1.19%		
1945-69 and undated	8	159	51			218
%	3.67%	72.93%	23.40%			
West Totals						448
Post-Wende	1	27	28	3	2	61
%	1.64%	44.26%	45.90%	4.92%	3.28%	
1970-89	13	35	56	1		105
%	12.38%	33.33%	53.34%	0.95%		
1945-69 and undated	8	187	87			282
%	2.84%	66.31%	30.85%			

Illustrative Monument Erection in East and West Germany – Expellee Numbers and Monuments

West Germany

Bavaria

Bamberg

Expellee numbers: 15 November 1946 - population 78,673; 23,530 *Zugewanderte*, 29.9%.

Gedenkstein Hain Schillerwiese, *Grundstein* 5 August 1950, *Einweihung* 12 September 1965

Rübezahl sculpture, 12 July 1964

Troppau monument, Troppauerplatz, 20 September 1964

Regensburg

Expellee Numbers: 15 November 1946 - population 123,357; 27,678 *Zugewanderte*, 22.4%.

Gedenkstätte Catholic cemetery 1949

Gedenkstätte Protestant cemetery 1949

Ahnendenkmal Catholic cemetery 1980

Gedenktafel Klarenangerschule 1995

Straubing

Expellee Numbers: 15 November 1946 - population 34,705; 9,577, *Zugewanderte* 27.6%.

Gedenkstätte, *Waldfriedhof*, 1949, extended 1984

Gedenkkreuz, cemetery, no date but presumed after 1953

Hl. Nepomuk 30 June 1991

Gedenktafel, *Rathaus*, 3 September 2005

Landshut

Expellee Numbers: 15 November 1946 - population 46,014; 14,084 *Zugewanderte*, 30.6%.

Hochkreuz and *Gedenktafel*, October 1966

Kapelle, 1986

Frau, Podewilsstrasse, 23 June 2001

Schleswig-Holstein

Eckernförde

Expellee Numbers: 27 May 1946 - former *Kreis* Eckernförde population 93,034; 44,647 expellees, 47.99%.

Kurfürst Pillau statue, Borby, Eckernförde, September 1955

Pommernstein, intersection Brennofenweg and Sehestedterstraße, 2/3 September 1961

Landsmannschaften stone by waterfront, no date but presumed to be 2004

Möln

Expellee Numbers: 1 January 1946 - population 12,399; 5,899 expellees, 47.58%.

Gedenkstein Massow, 1966

Gedenkstein Gollnow, 1981

Symbol der Zusammengehörigkeit map 1987, amended post-Wende

Patenschaftzeichen, 1984

East Germany**Saxony****Freiberg**

Expellee Numbers: 31 July 1947 - population 107,146; 31,603 expellees, 29.5%.

Cemetery monument, 14 September 2002

Pirna

Expellee Numbers: 31 July 1947 - population 164,386; 45,673 expellees, 27.78%.

Park monument, Brückenstrasse, 2004

Thuringia**Erfurt**

Expellee Numbers: 31 December 1948 - Erfurt *Stadt* population, 170,047; 38,969 expellees, 22.92%.

Cemetery monument, 5 May 1994

Apolda

Expellee Numbers: 31 December 1948 - population 33,729; 7,718 expellees, 22.88%.

Cemetery monument, 10 May 1995

Jena

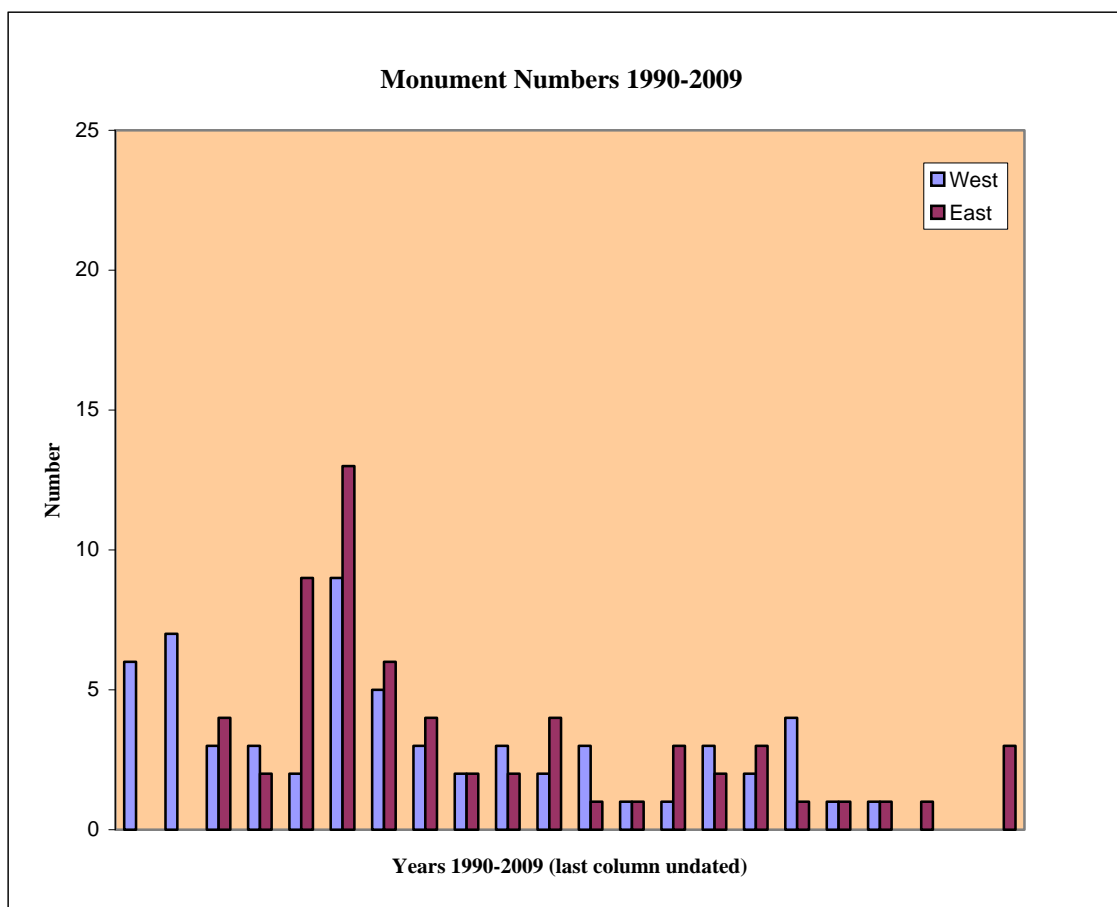
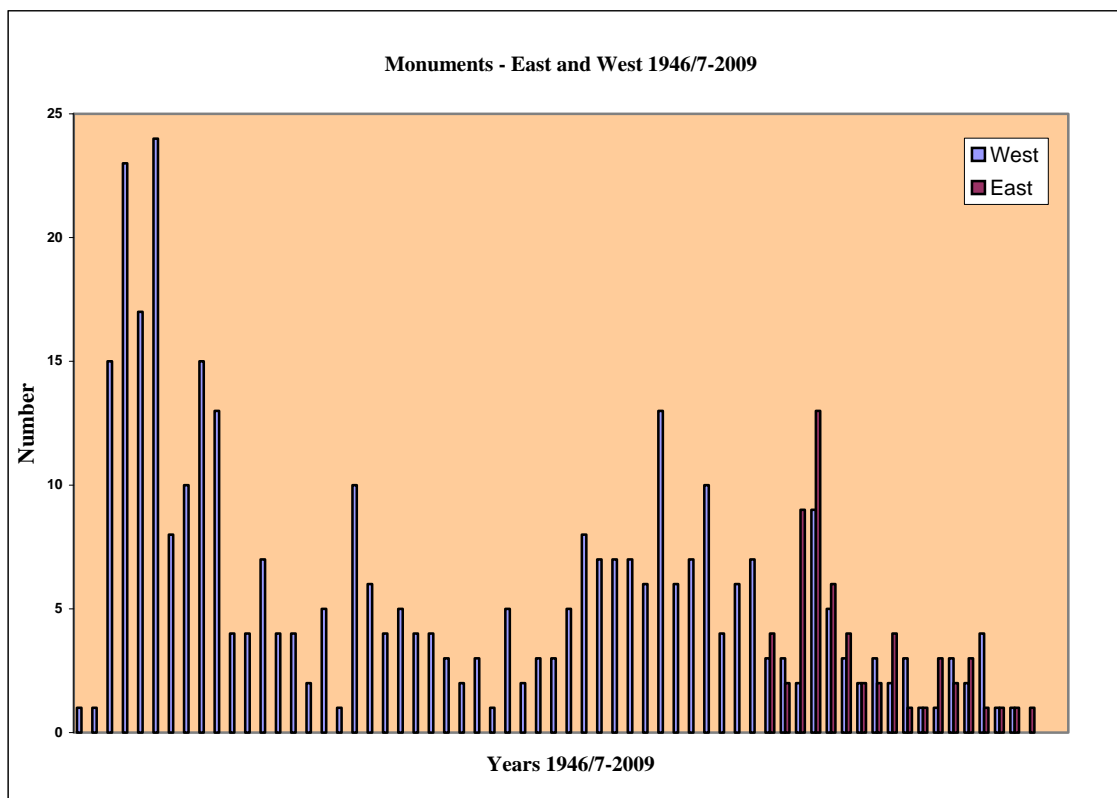
Expellee Numbers: 31 December 1948 - population 76,855; 10,801 expellees, 14.05%.

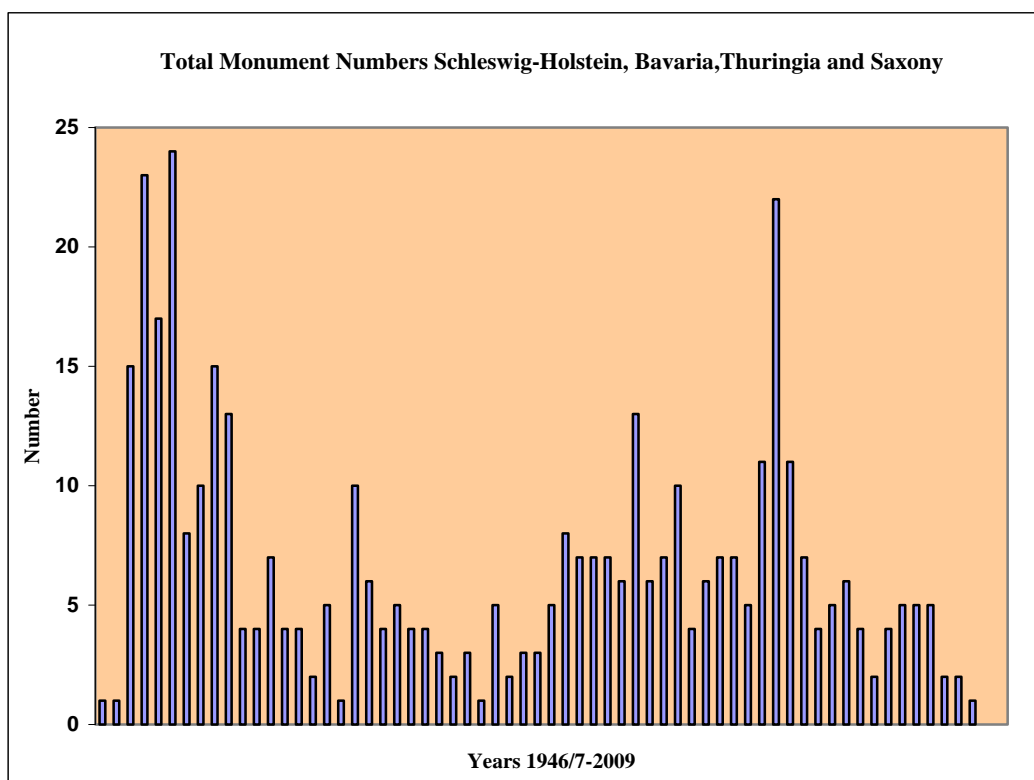
Monument by cemetery gates, 25 September 1998

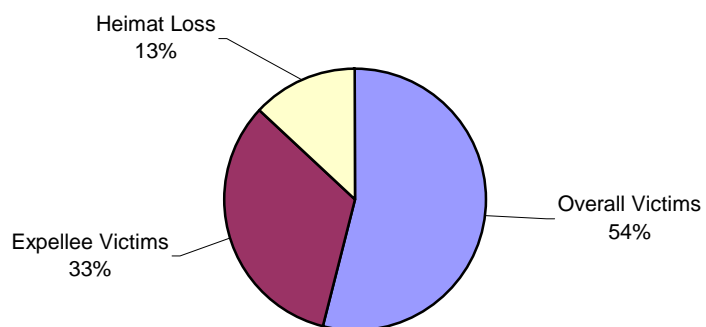
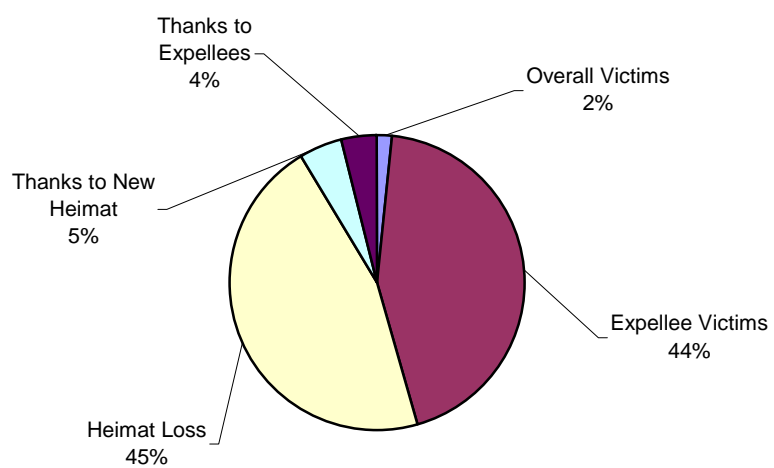
Weimar

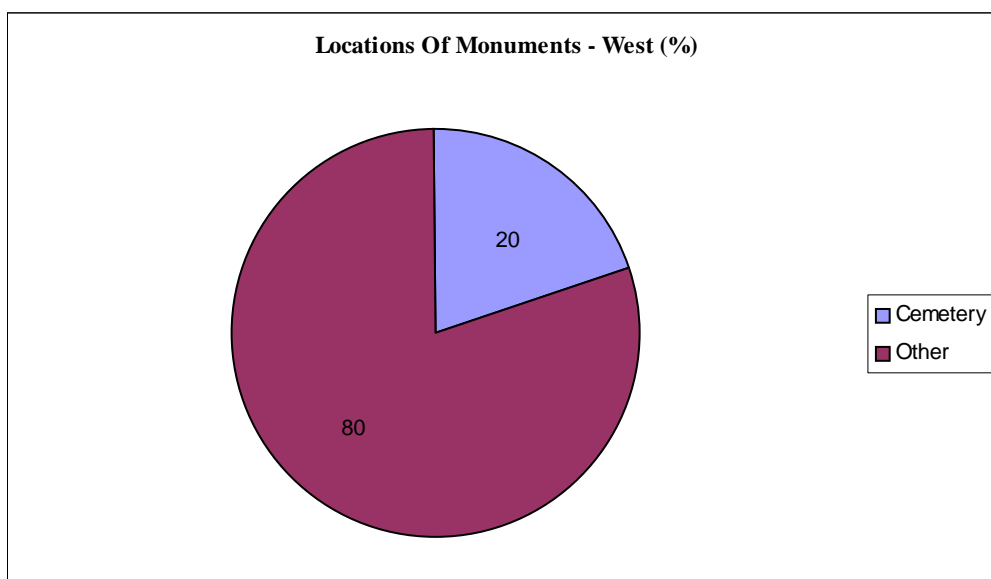
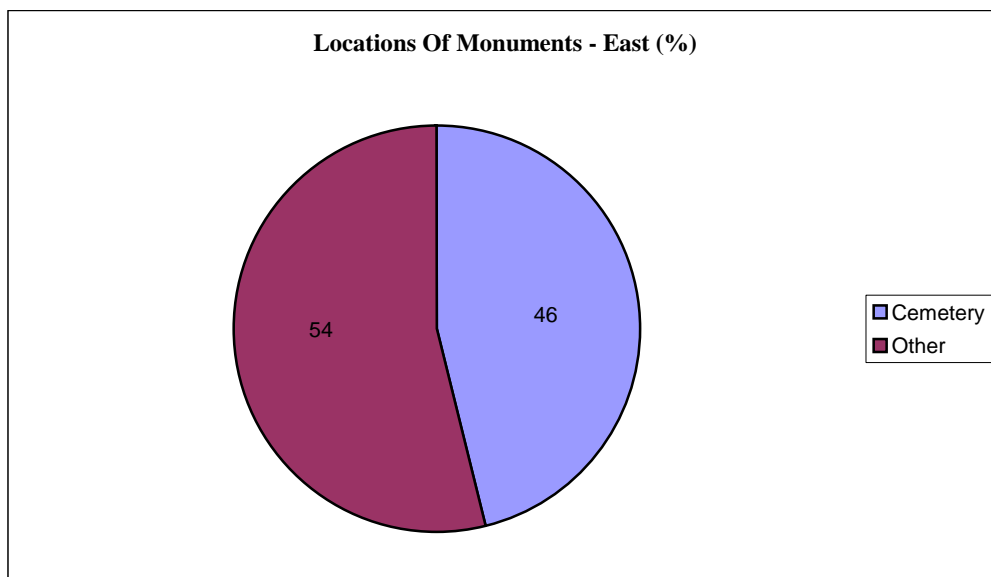
Expellee Numbers: 31 December 1948 - population 66,141; 14,394 expellees, 21.76%.

Cemetery monument, 18 November 2000





Main Focus Of Monuments - East (%)**Main Focus Of Monuments - West (%)**



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